INTERACTIVE VENDING SYSTEM(S) FEATURING PRODUCT CUSTOMIZATION, MULTIMEDIA, EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT, WITH BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, MODELS, AND METHODS

Publication Classification

Int. Cl.7 ......................................................... A63F 9/24
U.S. Cl. .......................................................... 235/381

ABSTRACT

Individual or multiple-unit vending systems/kiosks with the ability to create highly customized products at the time of sale, with audio-visual features, handicap access and additional abilities and/or components; with multiple delivery abilities of tangible and/or intangible product(s); new real estate opportunities and business models, including business opportunities and/or jobs for disadvantaged people. This invention provides products for humans, animals and plants, and takes in one or more of the following product categories, without limitation: water, beverages, foodstuffs, toys, games contests, greeting cards, photography/video, audio/music, personal care products; using converging technologies such as, but not limited to: telecommunications, wireless data transmission, smart cards, etc. Benefits include, without limitation: test marketing, focus groups, and new product introductions using consumer interaction; education, entertainment, rewards, promotions, advertising, contests, charitable support, etc.
INTERACTIVE VENDING SYSTEM(S), FEATURING PRODUCT CUSTOMIZATION, MULTIMEDIA, EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT, WITH BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, MODELS, AND METHODS

[0001] The present application is a continuation of PCT/US2003/032964 designating the United States and filed on Oct. 16, 2003 which in turn claimed priority from U.S. Provisional Application 60/418,769 filed Oct. 16, 2002, which application is hereby included by reference.

BACKGROUND

[0002] 1. Field

[0003] The present invention relates generally to vending machines and/or vending kiosks but more particularly to a vending machine system and/or a vending kiosk systems; which employ multimedia features, new product delivery technologies, labeling; and packaging technologies, along with accompanying business models, methods, and opportunities whereby the system(s) dispense(s) products that are meant to work in consort, or systems that are to work in consort, regardless of the field of inventing.

[0004] 2. Description of the Field and Related Art

[0005] The Value of Vending

[0006] Vending machines provide numerous benefits to customers and operators alike. Vending machines typically provide customers with the convenience of service and twenty-four-hour accessibility. Likewise, owner’s benefit from the ability of vending machines, in general, to make automated sales of merchandise to customers, often at unconventional locations and times of day, without substantial labor costs.

[0007] Background of Inventor, Technologies, and Vocabulary

[0008] The inventor’s background is in unique beverage delivery system’s and may be considered foundational for this invention although the invention is not limited to beverages or even foodstuffs. Reference can be made to the following patent documents to understand the inventor’s background:


[0012] Application 10/244699 which is a continuation in part of PCT/US01/09171: Method of Hydration; Infusion Package System(s), Support Member(s), Delivery System(s), and Method(s); with business Model(s) and Method(s)

[0013] Technologies Used in This Invention

[0014] This invention goes beyond conventional vending systems, especially with more than one agenda/purpose which may or may not be obvious at a glance. The invention includes integrated systems and employs the convergence of many different technologies.

[0015] The inventor has spent considerable time studying the following (but not limited to the following) technologies, their place in society as well as their acceptance by consumers. Such tangible technologies include but are not limited to the history and background of: vending machines, arcade games, video/computer games, pinball machines, jukeboxes, the slot machine, telephones, computers, transistors, sensors, multi-media entertainment, the Internet, evolution of software (noting that software is getting smarter with processor and memory power exploding, and that software that thinks for itself—or at least appears to—will become a reality). Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM), Asymmetrical Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL), Assistive technologies for the handicapped.

[0016] Intangible considerations are directed towards the following but not limited to: the study (psychology) of the value of promotions, advertising, rewards, interaction, entertainment, education, personalization, customization, licensing, and sanitation. Additional intangible considerations are directed towards concepts as demonstrated by magicians, the success of the circus, Las Vegas, Rube Goldberg (delivery systems), etc.

[0017] With the convergence of more than one of the above new business opportunities, models, and methods come forth as well.

[0018] Assistive Technologies (AT)

[0019] AT comes in many shapes and sizes. The one trait shared by each example of AT is the power to enhance the life of a person with a disability. The Washington Assistive Technology Resource Center describes AT as follows:

[0020] Technology for more independent, productive and enjoyable living—can be simple or complex. These technology solutions improve an individual’s ability to learn, compete, work and interact with family and friends.

[0021] People use assistive technology to achieve greater independence and to enhance the quality of their lives.

[0022] Some AT come easily to mind, such as wheelchairs and closed-captioned television. Others may be overlooked at first by the general population, but are still familiar to many people, including Braille, sign language, and ramps. These inventions, although useful, have only played supporting roles to the major stars in the AT revolution.

[0023] The biggest part of this revolution now is in the office. From multinational corporations to family-run shops, disabled people are finding that they have an expanding place in the business world. As computers have assumed a dominant role in the office environment, AT has made it possible for many people to compete in the workforce. While many forms of AT have been of great benefit to the disabled community these technologies have becoming foundational for mainstream inventiveness. Ergo technologies under this category are incorporated into this invention to not just help those with health challenges and need assistance but converge with other technologies therefore best serving this vending invention. Therefore, any part of
this invention may have a new type of handicap access (becoming handicap friendly) even if the user has to bring a connecting part needed for operation. (any user, even if not handicapped can bring any connecting part for access, ease and efficiency of operation).

[0024] Some of the important areas of development relevant to this inventiveness are (but not limited to) the following:

[0025] Modified or Alternative Computer Input and Output Device

[0026] Computer access is necessary in most new jobs being created in the corporate world. By using the Braille system to aid and/or modify computer input and output devices, the blind are enjoying increased productivity and job satisfaction.

[0027] Perhaps not so familiar is Hand Tapper III by Peter Grison—this system makes use of a pad of push-up pins, whereby resting his or her hand upon the pad of pins, the user is able to receive a constant stream of output from a computer; the computer interprets text on-screen and sends the data to the Hand Tapper III, where every pin corresponds to a symbol or word of text that the user feels as it is pushed up into the palm and fingers of one hand; a similar concept is the Braille strip that blind users can lay in front of a keyboard, which produces Braille symbols one row at a time while the user's fingers rest on the strip.

[0028] Voice-activated control software for using Graphical User Interface programs—blind computer users have been challenged with interpreting the symbols used on-screen in programs such as Windows or the Macintosh Operating System; because these programs utilize pictures instead of words to present data to the viewer, software has been developed that can either read aloud or print out on a Braille translation device the text that accompanies each icon.

[0029] Many workers with disabilities other than blindness are utilizing computers with the aid of such tools as: mouthsticks or headwands—using pointers in the form of headwands or mouthsticks, people with restricted hand or arm movement can operate computers by pressing on keys or directing a surrogate mouse; in this manner, even quadriplegics are able to access computers with the same ease as individuals with total mobility.

[0030] Trackballs—Trackballs are used as an alternative to the traditional computer mouse; the device is similar to a mouse that has been turned upside down, so that only part of the ball's surface is exposed; the user simulates the movement of a mouse by moving the ball in the desired direction and thus controlling the cursor on-screen without moving the entire housing structure. Trackballs are now more mainstream in fact this inventor uses a trackball mouse.

[0031] Dvorak keyboards—featuring a different layout than the standard QWERTY keyboard (referring to the letters at the left side of the top row on a traditional keyboard interface), the Dvorak system makes one-handed use of a keyboard easier; keys are arranged so that frequently-combined letters are placed near each other, reducing the amount of hand movement that would otherwise be required.

[0032] Key locks—Key locks allow the user to push down more than one key at a time; by implementing the use of key locks, people using mouthsticks or headwands can perform multi-key functions like Alt-S or Control-P; these are simple tools which attach to the keyboard and allow the user to push down one key and hold it in place while rotating an arm of the key lock onto another key simultaneously.

[0033] Eye-controlled input—This form of input tracks the movement of the user's eye; keys on an on-screen keyboard are activated when the user's gaze pauses on a key for a specified length of time, usually two seconds.

[0034] On-screen keyboards—These keyboards can be controlled by the touch of a headwand or mouth-stick or through eye-controlled input.

[0035] Sticky keys—Sticky keys work similarly to key locks, but are controlled by software rather than a physical tool; programs instruct the computer to accept a single keystroke as the first part of a multi-key instruction, and the computer then waits for the second keystroke before executing any tasks.

[0036] Auto repeat function disablers—This form of software works by instructing the computer to produce only one letter when a key is pressed down, ignoring the length of time that the key is actually depressed; by ignoring the time lapse, the computer knows to produce a single letter "m" instead of a continuous stream that would appear "mmmmmm."

[0037] Speech Synthesizers and Related Communication Tools for the Deaf

[0038] Deaf people have overcome many communication challenges with the aid of AT. Everyday tasks such as knowing when a computer has beeped and participating in presentations are possible with new developments, including:

[0039] Messages, and visual beep indicators allow deaf computer users to stay in touch with these occurrences.

[0040] Electronic note-takers—electronic note-takers produce printouts of what is being spoken in a room, and deaf people are able to read the printout while the speaker is presenting information; these devices are very useful in meetings and demonstrations; when lip-reading may not be possible.

[0041] Speech synthesizers—speech synthesizers like the Gus Multimedia Speech System let users construct words and sentences on a computer screen which are spoken out loud by the system; made famous through use by Stephen Hawking, speech synthesizers let the user build custom dictionaries or work from existing dictionaries of commonly-used words and phrases.

[0042] Automatic Text Interpretation Systems (AT) for the Blind

[0043] With AT tools, the blind are able to process all of the information presented to sighted people, including business reports, computerized documents, email, forms and file cards, and book and magazine articles. Absolutely any printed text can now be "read" by the blind. Aside from the
Braille printers and translation software tools, mentioned above, the following devices are also used by blind people accessing non-Braille texts:

[0044] Optical Character Recognition (OCR)—OCR uses scanners to input books or other printed materials into a computer, which can then produce either a hard copy of the text in Braille or a voice-synthesized copy that can be listened to, recorded, and played back for future reference.

[0045] Voice-output devices—A machine “reads” text through Optical Character Recognition software, and synthesized speech is used to present the text to a blind person; using this method, it is possible to quickly access the information stored on file cards and forms or in phone directories and hand-written notes.

[0046] Scientific and Mathematical Data Interpretation Systems

[0047] Blind scientists and mathematicians have found that Braille is inadequate for interpreting numbers and symbols effectively. Several alternative systems have been developed to address this limitation, including:

[0048] Nemeth Braille code—This form of Braille utilizes symbols and non-traditional Braille characters for the presentation of numbers, especially in complex mathematics; while useful in calculus and differential equations, some users have found a need for an alternative that will allow blind computer users to print out numerical calculations without requiring that the code be translated into non-Braille characters and symbols; this limitation led to the development of MNS.

[0049] MNS by Kenneth Frasse—MNS uses text-recognition software in conjunction with speech-synthesis and printing software to create audible recordings and printouts of math data that can be used by sighted students or instructors to follow along with the work done by a blind person.

[0050] GS* by John Gardner—GS8 uses eight dots instead of the six dots used in traditional Braille, allowing more combinations of dots; this method eliminates the need to spell out words such as plus and minus, replacing the words with symbols created by incorporating the extra two dots into the standard Braille system; similarly, numbers are given their own symbols, and are no longer represented by the letter of the alphabet that corresponds to the number (1=a, 2=b, 3=c, and so on).

[0051] Audio System for Technical Reader (ASTER)—ASTER uses a speech synthesizer to read highly technical documents so that even diagrams and unusual fonts are read aloud; different pitches are assigned to different types of text, so that the beginning of a paragraph or an item appearing in subscript sound distinct when compared to the voice used to read plain text; the user is able to customize the pitch assignments, as well as the formats in which numerical equations are presented.

[0052] Dotplus—Dotplus prints out charts and diagrams in a tactile version so that lines are felt rather than seen, combining Braille for textual representations with symbols for numerical or illustrative representations.

[0053] Mainstream Technologies

[0054] Cable Modems A cable modem is an electronic device that enables a personal computer (PC) to connect to a high-speed data network and send and receive data over the coaxial cable used in cable television (CATV) systems.

[0055] For an information superhighway with no speed limits, stop signs, or curbs, the cable modem could change the one-way street of television into a multi-lane highway with millions of on- and off-ramps, create opportunity for new ways of communicating, and focus attention on the PC as a source of information, entertainment, and personal communications.

The History and use of Cable Telephony

[0056] Cable television and telephone companies are two separate industries, which secretly at first, then later openly, coveted each other’s business. With the passing of new, more liberal telecommunications rules and regulations (most notably the Telecommunications Act of 1996), both the telephone companies and CATV companies have been given permission to enter the other’s business. For the CATV industry this means transmitting two-way signals in the form of data and voice. This type of transmission is cable telephony.

[0057] Convergence means change. Convergence is tearing down barriers and will therefore also construct barriers as it streaks and ripples through society, industry, and institutions of all kinds.

[0058] One’s definition of convergence has its roots in the perception of what is converging and how it will affect our world. Is it technology or content? Is it communication or information delivery? Is it a new industry or just new alliances of existing companies? Is it really convergence at all, or a divergence of people and ideas?

[0059] Convergence means a world in which people are not denied access to any ideas or visions that have been written, photographed, painted, spoken, or performed.

[0060] For some convergence proponents, the end product will be a massive interconnection of digital technologies. The connection can be wire or wireless, voice or data, terrestrial or space, but the goal is to enable all technologies to connect with purpose, speed and accuracy.

[0061] The technologies involved in convergence are all those used in the four essential functions—create, display, distribute, and store—that can be applied to anything comprised of text, visuals, or sound. The industries of convergence include those that manufacture and sell products and services used in the creation, display, distribution, and storage of anything comprised of text, visuals, or sound.

[0062] These industries include the aforementioned computer, television, and telephone industries but cannot be limited to these giants of industry. Movie and television producers, data storage, radio, publishing, photography, consumer electronics, appliance manufacturers, home and commercial construction, and utilities. Libraries, hospitals, schools, universities, government of all levels, police and fire—each connects with others and the people they serve. They converge because of the available technologies, the industries that provide them, and the need for what the institutions offer are but a few that will be involved in convergence.
For many institutions, the convergence is one of ideas. If a consumer can access medical information from any or all, the information has converged, and in the process the institutions themselves, or at least some of their functions have converged.

Convergence means we must redefine our world and our interactions within it, but without the limitations and defining elements of time and distance. Centuries, even decades ago, decisions were delayed months and days until communications could be exchanged.

Convergence drives instant decision-making, which will drive reactions.

Maybe your future includes a PAN (personal area network) to connect your personal communication devices via a low-frequency network inside your body. Electronic devices on or near your body will exchange digital information through capacitively coupled picocurrents. Shaking hands with business contacts will transfer data to their PAN, including your address, phone number, and professional information. Now one can transfer personal data to the vending system.

Asynchronous transfer mode (ATM), which makes more efficient use of networks for data, phone, and video. In almost any transmission there are blank spots, or short periods of time in which no data, voice, or picture is actually being sent. ATM uses the blank spots in a transmission to send other communications. Another big plus for ATM is that it can switch streams of multimedia traffic at mind-boggling speeds. It is conceived that an ATM machine be connected to a vending machine whereby financial transactions from the ATM pay for vending.

Holography is a technique, which allows the recording and playback of true, three-dimensional images. The image is called a hologram. Unlike other 3-D "pictures", holograms provide what is called "parallax". Parallax allows the viewer to move back and forth, up and down, and see different perspectives—as if the object were actually there.

Holography continues to provide the most accurate depiction of three-dimensional images in the world. Holography allows the recording and playback of true, three-dimensional images. The image is called a hologram. Unlike other 3-D "pictures", holograms provide what is called "parallax". Parallax allows the viewer to move back and forth, up and down, and see different perspectives—as if the object were actually there. The concept of thinking in a spatial, rather than linear manner is at the very heart of holographic principles.

CD Players and Compact Disc Player

Found in the home, car, and even the palm of your hand, the compact disc player is a truly pervasive piece of consumer electronics equipment. The compact disc player allows anyone access to studio-quality sound nearly anywhere.

The laser pickup represents the actual physical interface between the data on the compact disc media and the player. The pickup is typically mounted on a movable sled mounted under the disc. It is comprised of the laser, a system of lenses, a photo-detector, and a motor, which moves the sled. The actual laser is a semiconductor-type and emits light at a wavelength of 780 nanometers, just within the infrared spectrum.

Information on the compact disc is represented by a series of lands, or flat spots, and pits, or holes. However, when viewed from the bottom of the disc from where the data is read, the pits are actually bumps. The difference in height between the pits and lands is specified, so a unique property of light can be used to obtain an electrical signal.

Sibling Technologies

Although the hardware to effectively implement them did not exist in 1982, the designers of the compact disc standard exercised a great deal of foresight by allowing for variations on the type of data stored on the disc. Among these alternative uses are acronyms such as CD-ROM, CD-R, CD-i, Photo CD, CD-V, CD+G/M, and game discs (which are merely specialized CD-ROMs). Rather than storing audio data, all of these formats have the ability to store any type of digital data (CD-ROM and CD-R), still or motion video images (Photo CD and CD-V), and a mixed stream of audio, video, and other data (CD-i and CD+G/M).

Regardless of what is stored on these discs, the fundamentals behind their operation are nearly identical to that of the audio compact disc.

Two other technologies in the marketplace that share some similarities with the compact disc include the video laser disc and Sony's Mini-Disc. The laser disc stores its information in an analog format. While this yields the benefits of an optical reading mechanism, none of the benefits of a digital signal are realized. Digital Video Disc, recently standardized by Sony and Toshiba, promises to remedy this. It will offer a digital storage format several times that of today's compact disc, while maintaining the same small size of, as well as backward compatibility with, the compact disc. The Mini-Disc shares many similarities with the compact audio disc in terms of data representation. However, the Mini-Disc has a smaller form factor, is stored on a self-enclosed read/writeable magneto-optical disc, and utilizes data reduction that slightly lessens its sonic reproduction quality.

Compact discs have moved from an expensive audio alternative to an attractive storage and playback medium that has permeated all aspects of our cultural, social, and work lives. Recent developments in storage and usage have affirmed the success of the compact disc, and promise to push the technology even further.

Identification Possibilities Within the Vending System

Overview of understanding means by which to catch criminals, find lost children, and/or the like can be done within the vending concept of creating, purchasing, and receiving and are especially valuable when they intersect and feed into a centralizing area using A.F.I.S. (Automated Fingerprint Identification System), Facial feature data bases, and HITS (Homicide Investigation and Tracking System). A.F.I.S. is a computerized database of fingerprints compiled from the records of national, state, and municipal offices in the United States.
Facial Feature Database

[0079] Tom Parker created a database of facial features. Using the faces of over 300 famous public figures, and each one was separated into such elements as nose, eyes, cheeks, hair, hairline, forehead, lips, ears, head shape, eyebrows, etc. Police artists can use this database when rendering drawings of suspects. Witnesses are able to describe a person by saying that they have the eyes of Ronald Reagan, the cheeks of Steven Spielberg, the nose of Ginger Rogers, the hair of Prince Charles, and so on.

[0080] Using such descriptions, composite images may be created by pulling those facial features from the system. There are several trillion possible faces that can be created from the database. People have an easier time describing people according to well-known images rather than by saying that the suspect has a broad forehead and deep-set eyes. HITS (Homicide Investigation and Tracking System)

[0081] The Homicide Investigation and Tracking System (HITS) is a computerized form completed by investigators, which allows them to track crimes across the United States. Up to 250 variables can be entered about each crime, including such vital statistics as the location of a crime, the nature of the crime, weapon(s) used, distinguishing evidence left at the scene (such as the presence of unusual symbols), and time of day.

[0082] The system incorporates information compiled from six different sources, and is one of seven databases devoted to a particular type of crime. While HITS is dedicated to murder investigations, the other six databases track data on sexual assault, preliminary information (before a type of crime has been determined), Department of Corrections (when a known convict is suspected of having involvement in a crime), gang-related crimes, timeline (the sequence of known or suspected events surrounding a crime), and the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP).

[0083] Of these other six systems, VICAP is the one with which most people are familiar. VICAP lets agents monitor unsolved violent crimes and look for patterns between the crimes. Using this system, officers can identify the trademarks of serial killers who may be working over wide geographic areas. The National Institute of Justice makes HITS, as well as the other six databases, available to agencies throughout the United States. Using this technology, officers can work together to compare notes and solve crimes.

[0084] As new technologies continue to develop, investigators will do more crime fighting in the vast dimensions of cyberspace than ever before. Even now, detectives have access to systems that rival the fictional tools used by superheroes, and the FBI is leading the pack by harnessing computer power to solve crimes in radically new ways.

Digital Video Disk (DVD): Video Storage:

[0088] DVD is latest advance in digital information storage technology and a virtual revolution across a wide range of consumer electronics applications. The advent of DVD has already stimulated a convergence of computer and entertainment technology that offers advantages to the consumer including but not limited to the possibility of obtaining new uses from existing technologies and of replacing several appliances with a single purchase. In addition, the power and versatility facilitate applications in areas such as entertainment, education, and multimedia production and will be economically feasible.

Possibilities for Use: Convergence

[0089] The single digital technology represented by DVD offers possibilities for convergence of multiple technological applications and for the integration of new and existing technologies into integrated and flexible systems.

[0090] Regarding the convergence of computer and television technology, one could, in theory, read and view any DVD title on a PC equipped with a DVD-ROM drive, so long as the computer was equipped with the silicon chip and the expansion board necessary to decode MPEG-2 and Dolby Digital. While few PCs have the audio or video hardware to take advantage of MPEG-2 and Dolby Digital, a number of companies are supporting the idea of making PCs that support Dolby Digital. But to fully combine the functions of television entertainment and computing into a single system, other innovative solutions will be required.

[0091] Products are already appearing on the market support the computer-entertainment convergence. From the PC side, the convergence of audio, video and computer technology represented by the DVD will allow a single technology to play, record and edit huge volumes of content, as well as to create a wide range of multimedia applications. DVD technology also suggests the possibility of cheaper and more flexible video production. DVD video also creates a possible demand for high-definition television (HDTV), the market status of which remains problematic at this time, and will undoubtedly facilitate the marketing of computer games far more sophisticated than those available at the present time.

[0092] Electronic Cash, Electronic Money: Paying With Data Bytes An extension of banking processes such as automatic fund transfers and wire transfers, electronic money is currency in digital form that can be transmitted through open computer networks and systems such as the Internet and the World Wide Web, with home computers being an integral part of the process. Eventually with security reigning at the forefront of purchasing through vending.

[0093] Consumers will use these same systems to purchase goods and services from an increasing number of
companies who joined the networks as they grow. Although there were initial concerns over the security of purchases made through these networks, they soon diminished as more and more consumers embraced the convenience and ease these systems presented.

Digital Credit Cards, and Checks, Stored-Value Cards (Smart Cards)

[0094] There are programs by which to transmit credit card information which serve as an interface between consumers and merchants, using encryption programs to protect the details of the actual transaction. Programs such as Cyber-cash for merchant affiliates and Cybercast which is designed to protect consumers against credit card fraud by keeping the actual credit card number away from the company where the order is being placed can be adopted to work in a vending operation.

[0095] A similar program developed by First Virtual Holdings issues a “Virtual PIN” to customers to use in place of credit card information, eliminating the need for special software or encryption.

[0096] For consumers who would rather pay by check, virtual check writing programs are also available that draw funds directly from real bank accounts. Like other secured payment programs, special check-writing software creates an electronic wallet on the user’s system. When ready to buy, consumers pay out of the wallet either by credit card or the program’s version of a checking account.

Stored-Value Cards (“Smart” Cards)

[0097] These cards contain a microchip that is preprogrammed with a specific dollar amount. To make a purchase, the card is swiped through a special reader, which automatically deducts the amount of the purchase from the stored value on the card and credits the amount to the vendor’s account. With added information embedded in the card, the card can become a restrictive card and/or a card that allows additional benefits. Additional added features will include medical information, personal identification as well. Further, the cards may include 3D graphics capabilities which will allow the user to experience 3D virtual worlds in real-time without jerky motion or blocky objects. Smart cards etc may use the concept of a Dial-Up Services (Dial-up services require that their customers pay a monthly subscription fee and connect to their servers using a modem-equipped computer. These services had email, reference materials, chat systems, and of course games) whereby the card has a predetermined amount of time on it in the same way as a subscription would be. This may work for best for part of the vending operation. A likely situation would be where you can play all the games for a month but you have to buy a product to enable the game play. Otherwise there is a charge for the game as well.

Shared Tenant Services Shared tenant services (STS)

[0098] Shared Tenant Services Shared tenant services (STS) is an industry that bundles together a variety of services, such as local and long distance telephone, cable TV, and security and provides them to residential or office tenants in a building or campus.

[0099] As noted in this application the inventor bundles together a variety of service potentials (such as the aforementioned), opportunities, products, etc. but in new and novel ways, providing methods and opportunities for the user, operator, owner, any or all.

[0100] The concept of sharing services and providing packages of services makes interfacing with smart cards in co-operation with vending opportunities most unique.

[0101] STS began in the true entrepreneurial fashion, with small companies providing bundled services to buildings or campus-like business and residential areas. Most real estate and property management companies don’t want to be in the communications business and welcome the chance to divest themselves of the responsibility to provide state-of-the-art communication technology to tenants. Most people who live or work in a residential or business facility purchase services from a variety of companies, receiving separate bills each month from their service providers.

[0102] Types of services can include: local telephone, long distance telephone, toll-free numbers, calling cards, cable TV, and office or residential security. An STS provider consolidates all or some of the types of services into a customizable package and offers it at a favorable price to a group of people or a facility, such as an apartment house or office complex such services as basic telephone, cable TV, and security, STS providers are looking at bundling services for video conferencing, e-mail, data transmission, integrated services digital network (ISDN) lines, Internet access, and voice messaging. For business facilities, the STS provider can also incorporate copier services, temporary personnel services, and data and word processing—any services that could be used jointly by multiple tenants. In this invention one or more of the above can be bundled with the smart card thus offering premium opportunities for all involved. Once a vending operation is designed and equipped to handle the vast array of electronic services, they move closer to being classified as an “intelligent vending system.” Ergo the name “Smart Vending”

Virtual Reality

[0103] Virtual reality systems use computers to create simulated environments that can be entered and interacted with by using special equipment such as goggles and data gloves. Again they can be supplied at the machine or personally buy the user bringing assistance and usability to the machine.

[0104] This is critically important to this invention, as it is now possible to take the user to an environment geographically, including but not limited to the exploration of future worlds, experiences using virtual systems, alone and/or combined with smell, touch, audio, product(s) and more. Virtual reality (VR) is one of the hottest research and development areas in the computer industry today, and now can be incorporated into Smart Vending.

[0105] Potential applications range from medical imaging and interior design to intercontinental videoconferencing and there are a number of ways in which virtual reality technology can be employed. Basically its underlying premise, however, is to create more intuitive ways for humans and computers to work together. Ergo it is a very significant part of the vending system.
Just as we have heard of experience theater we are now inventing experience vending, whereby various elements will be used to create that total illusion, such as the brain’s sensory channels and the body’s motor network. This again is what the inventor calls “Experience Vending.”

Cinerama created films that could envelop the human senses of sight, sound, scent, and feel. Sensorama simulated all the sensory experiences of a motorcycle ride by combining 3-D movies, stereo sound, wind, and aromas. By gripping the handlebars on a specially equipped motorcycle seat and wearing a binocular-like viewer, the “passenger” could travel through scenes including California sand dunes and Brooklyn streets.

The importance here is the inventors vision of a medium that combined multi-sensory real and/or artificial experiences is incorporated into the invention.

Cinerama and Sensorama gave VR two of its most important theoretical and visual legacies, but artificial intelligence research largely formed the scientific platform for VR as it exists today.

One area of artificial intelligence research explored building better interfaces between people and machines. Sketchpad, the program, used computer technology to create images from abstract ideas. Using Sketchpad and a pen-like device, a computer could create sophisticated images on a display screen resembling a television set. The system responded by rapidly updating the drawing so that the relationship between the user’s action and the graphical display was clear. Computer-aided design (CAD) grew out of this. Following this was the development of technology that would allow computer users to actually enter the world of computer-generated graphics. Then came the unveiling of the head-mounted display (HMD), which took users inside a three-dimensional world by limiting visual contact to the displays shown by small computer screens mounted in binocular glasses. Videoplace, one of several experimental artistic environments, used computers to create “artificial reality,” allowing viewers to interact with computer-generated graphics and projected images.

Artificial Reality is Adaptable to Vending Systems and Their Creative Appeal to Draw Consumers to the System.

Researchers at NASA created pilot training system for manned space missions. This led to the development of the Virtual Interface Environment Workstation. It was the first system that combined such standard VR elements as computer graphics and video imaging, 3-D sound, voice recognition and synthesis, and a head-mounted display. A data glove, based on an invention designed to play air guitar, completed the system.

Most head-tracking displays resemble helmets, from which viewing devices are displayed. Instrumented gloves use sensors passing over joints in the user’s hand to measure the position of the fingers and hand. Special devices called trackers are attached to this equipment. They translate movements into coordinates, which are then fed back to the computer so that the model of the virtual world can be appropriately changed.

Now as it is possible to enter virtual worlds through a desktop computer, it is also possible to enter virtual worlds from a vending system.

You’ll Be There (Virtually) From the Jun. 22, 1999 issue of PC Magazine:

Instead of pulling out a computer every time you need one, why not just wear one? Perhaps a device you wear like a hat, or it may be eyeglasses that can display a transparent image. Connect this with a GPS system and it can tell you where you are. Connect it with the right database and it might show you prices at the nearest market. Take this to the vending operation for expanded opportunities.

Porrazzo Advanced Membrane Technology (AMT)

“IT is hard to imagine that something that looks like ‘Saran-Wrap’ can be turned into a speaker, let alone a microphone or an antenna”.

A new foundational telecommunications technology—a full digital capable transducer. This Advanced Membrane Technology is a thin film that can be a wireless antenna, microphone, a loudspeaker and sensor, simultaneously.

Using the Porrazzo Technologies will open up the world of new innovative vending machines/opportunities, with their integrating systems and inter communicating abilities with other compatible systems. The Porrazzo Advanced Membrane technology U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,450,670; 5,377,359.

A principal technology involves creation, amplification and transmission of electromagnetic waves, especially radio frequency waves, described as membrane film transducers. A primary, practical application of the technology enables the penetration of RF waves in urban environments, non-line of sight situations, and even coupled to the earth plane. Intelligent, e.g. computer/software control and steering of the membrane and simultaneous transmission and/or reception at different frequencies is contemplated and has been shown feasible.

This technology will allow the transmission of energy waves through sound and light sources, resulting in the development and production of information systems and communications products. Applications of the technology involve assimilation, transmission and reception of information relative to sound, light and other carrier waves.

The Porrazzo Membrane has the capability of direct digital interface with computer systems, network applications including the Internet, flight and transportation systems, phased array systems, wireless communications, multimedia, medical electronics, as well as countless other commercial, military, and consumer applications.
For game play and vending machine interfacing using the Porrazo System(s) (especially here the combination of sensor and speaker) which allows the user to generate on screen movement using, as an example, the movement of your hands to move objects on the screen while simultaneously from the same surface hear sounds.

Robotics

Robotics are advancing at such an amazing pace, and while today most robots are at work in large companies, doing everything from sorting and delivering mail to helping to manufacture products from cars to laptops. Soon they will begin to come home as well. With the understanding that one day you'll have a small robot to help with everyday tasks—perhaps one that will take out the garbage when it's cold outside it is easily seen how important a role robotics will play in the vending system in multiple ways.

Computing Is Distributed

Tomorrow's computing will be distributed, with lots of computers of all kinds working together to share information, perform amazing calculations, and track all kinds of data.

Faster Memory and I/O

There's a trend toward larger caches in today's chips. In addition to large caches, an incredibly important objective, is to get as much fast memory as close to the processor as possible and to reduce latencies to I/O devices. We'll also see a trend toward System on a Chip (SOC) designs, which incorporate cache, memory control, I/O control functions, and even embedded DRAM in some cases. Mainstream notebooks (using external RAM), handheld PCs, palm PCs, set-top boxes, and other information appliances are candidates for such devices. Another category, called chip multiprocessors (CMPs), will include multiple processor cores on a single chip. Set-top boxes, video games, and digital TVs are probable candidates. This inventor sees how CMPs will be able to be used in this invention by offering more flexibility of hardware, then software potential.

It is hopeful that we will have available multiple intelligent agents simultaneously acquiring and processing data from external sources, and systems that understand natural language. There are numerous scenarios this inventor could envision that would benefit this invention in total and or in part from multiple processors working simultaneously.

Further investigations of the following are to be considered as part of the evolutionary process to get to the present invention: vending machine(s) system and or the vending/kiosk system. The use of the following, but not limited to the following, technologies are also to be considered as foundational and useful to the present invention: vending machine(s) system and or the vending/kiosk system

- 5. Billboards
- 6. Advertising mediums
- 7. Point of Purchase (POP)
- 8. Toys
- 9. Electronics
- 10. Artificial Intelligence
- 11. Neon
- 12. Radiant barrier technology (mainly that of NASA) and other technologies as all related to transfer of hot and cold/electricity.

The Circus Example:

The circus revolves around promotions and promotion is one of the key elements in this vending composite . . . the way in which each part is so carefully crafted as to not just interface but to promote the entity as a whole. The parts are important, but the summary of the totality of the parts can purport an even greater synergy.

Banum believed in the line. "We ought to have a big show," the public expected and appreciated. But for everyone at THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH®, the real beginning is that moment when the lights go down and the show is just about to start. Anticipation! Expectation! 1. Just as a circus has multiple rings where the action is so it is possible in this invention. Certainly a circus is a grand theme that has existed for about a century. It is invented and conceived that the action, perhaps even the center ring, be the production attraction . . . mixing, matching etc. of the product and the rest of the rings be a part of the action, but to a lesser degree and/or just for entertainment sake. Sideshow can even be the side panels of the unit and also be integrated into the theme whether they vend or not.

- a. Aroma of a circus, audio direct and/or via headphones etc. all are to be considered part of the invention.
- b. Regardless of the product vend the labeling and branding can match that of the machine. In this instance the Circus. All theme concepts, by originality, and/or by licensing are possible. If a beverage is made then perhaps the dispensing container etc. will be the theme related Las Vegas Example.

Understanding the glamour of a Las Vegas environment which can translate to new and novel vending machine systems in ways that are non obvious to those skilled in the art.

Casinos continue their evolution toward high-tech wagering with every applicable breakthrough in modern technology and it is conceivable that vending will follow the same path.

Gambling, wagering and/or the like are considered illegal to those below the age of 21 in the United States. To that the inventor is respectful.

Las Vegas with computerized slot machines with poker, keno, blackjack, bingo and crap games we also have license television show games such as Wheel of Fortune etc.
As an example only this concept will also serve to familiarize users, patrons with resorts, (Las Vegas in this example) whereby a geographical location can be promoted, entertainment provided, and even various types of school lessons can be learned (math, geography, information about cultures {where appropriate}) while also receiving a vended product(s) simultaneously, and/or independently with the aforesaid be related to locally labeled and/or produced merchandise or expanded.

Video Games Video Games of all types are to be considered in totality and/or in separate and/or multiple components to be part of this invention with and or without legalized wagering.

There are many machines of skill and chance to provide both challenge and entertainment for the player. Video arcades are full of mechanical devices such as pinball machines, basketball free throw shooting machines, and punching machines as well as a myriad of electronic game machines such as video games.

Arcade game players enjoy games in which their skills are determinative of their success and in which they have control over the operation of the game. A game in which the operations of the mechanisms are clearly predictable and readily discernable is attractive to the arcade game player providing a challenge to the player’s skills such as hand-to-eye coordination and manual dexterity.

Therefore, and proven, has been the concept of a reward/prize in relation to a vending machine and specially when a game is involved it is desirable to have prize dispensing machine which provides the player accommodation whether he has won or lost.

U.S. Pat. No. 4,976,440 to Faith titled: Arcade-type prize dispensing machine . . . teaches that a game or prize dispensing apparatus and method which transfers prizes or objects from a lower position in the machine to an upper position of the machine, releasing the prizes and allowing them to freefall. The player attempts to strike or grab the falling prize by actuating a mechanism at the appropriate time. A successfully struck or grabbed prize may then be dispensed.

Vending Machines to Enhance Skills While Delivering Product

Arcade game players enjoy games in which their skills are determinative of their success and in which they have control over the operation of the game. A game in which the operations of the mechanisms are clearly predictable, and readily discernable is attractive to the arcade game player providing a challenge to the player’s skills such as hand-to-eye coordination and manual dexterity. To encourage play and vend it is considered by this inventor that it might be desirable to have prize dispensing machine aspect attached to the concept regardless on location.

Taking Video Games to Talking Vending Machine

While in many instances talking is not preferential it may serve further serves many important functions as well. Language translators within electronics which allows one to give commands in any language that is programmed into the machine.

U.S. Pat. No. 5,393,073 to Best teaches a Taking video game. The invention claims that it is an electronic system for simulating voice conversations between animated video characters and the system.

For children to talk to their favorite characters, learning better speech patterns and even hearing words in foreign languages can entertain while educate. Besides children react to characters and often times will listen better to their suggestions than a parent. Mickey Mouse asks me to drink this as an example.

Talking vending machines, especially with interactive voice dialogue capabilities can both entertain and educate, aside from their use for assistive necessities.

U.S. Pat. No. 5,292,125 to Hochstein, et al. titled Apparatus and method for electronically connecting remotely located video games teaches that it is possible to integrate the co-ordination of a computer game from more than one location.

1. As applicable to the present invention it is now possible that the vending machine with interactive gaming possibilities will not just be able to serve the just said but the game will be able to be played against the home company which fabricated the game, still retains ownership, has licensed to another entity, or sold or another entity.

2. This give much feed back not just to the linking of product with a game with characters, indicia, but moral concepts that that the company may wish to reach the consumer far cheaper, on a more one to one basis than advertising.

3. Further a reward for winning the game may be given to the consumer in the form of a free product from the machine, redemption via regular post or e-mail etc. This is a way for product companies to do good for you products with the association of all the aforesaid benefits. Many of our fast food companies Mac Donald’s as one does many cross promotions with Disney as an example. The Nabisco Company® owns part of a video game company.

4. The game can be changed on the spot with new cartridges installed or via new direct port to recipient technologies, which may be controlled from a home base. The game can have different skill levels by which to determine the sophistication of the consumer/player.

5. It is possible for the consumer to purchase by any means sets of plays with products included for each play of a series of multiple plays. Now we start to reward especially kids in a sound manner for creating good for you products with entertainment and edutainment.

U.S. Pat. No. 4,053,740 to Rosenthal titled: Video game system teaches that a self-contained operator responsive video game system capable of generating a virtually unlimited number of games.

1. With the foregoing and other limitations and drawbacks of the prior art in mind, one object of the present invention is to provide a completely self-contained video simulator which combines a
special purpose digital computer and a display system into a single unit dedicated to the purpose of providing operator interactive graphic simulations. The object here is to provide a programmable video simulator, which is capable of being programmed and reprogrammed to provide virtually an unlimited variety of games and other simulations each having its own operational rules and degree of required skill and difficulty.

[0168] 2. Another object is to provide a programmable video simulator wherein a substantial number of circuit elements serve multiple functions.

[0169] 3. A further intention is to provide a viewer with an interactive simulator system that generates a high resolution visual display of controlled objects wherein the system is simple to manufacture, operate and maintain and uses fewer components and is thus far less expensive to manufacture than other units capable of equal sophistication performance.

Rube Goldberg (RG) Concepts:

[0170] Rube Goldberg showed through his inventions difficult ways to achieve easy results. While most machines work to make difficult tasks simple, his inventions made simple tasks amazingly complex. Dozens of arms, wheels, gears, handles, cups, and rods were put in motion by balls, canary cages, pails, boots, bathtubs, paddles, and even live animals for simple tasks like squeezing an orange for juice or closing a window in case it should start to rain before one gets home.

[0171] Rube's inventions are a unique commentary on life's complexities. They provide a humorous diversion into the absurd that lampoons the wonders of technology. Rube's hilarious send-ups of man's ingenuity strike a deep and lasting chord with today's audience through caught in a high-tech revolution are still seeking simplicity.

[0172] Whether it be licensing of RG inventions or other inventions with the same qualities there is a following and certainly visually externally and/or internally will be a mode of operation for vending.

Inventor's Vocabulary:

[0173] 4. Vending system to the inventor is to include a new and novel machine within the machine as well as serial machines and/or to include the term kiosks working independently but related, multiple units consort, where you can approach the system and enter the system thereby and move to one or more places within the system, either in a linear, square, and/or a circular fashion, and exit through one or more ports. (The feeling of a surrounding environment)

[0174] a. Product may be tangible and/or intangible and range from water: to beverage, to food (anything consumed by mouth and/or enteral feeding), to personal health and beauty care and products, to accessories, to toys, to information, entertainment, information, education, gambling, contests, and/or the like.

[0175] b. The system may be indoors, outdoors, or a combination of both, meaning that part of the machine may be usable from the outdoors while a portion may remain indoors. Just as an example would be where a system in built into an exterior wall.

[0176] c. It is only necessary for one part to vend a product, which is delivered on site and/or designed for later delivery (regardless of means of delivery), the other portions can have one or more functions.

[0177] i. One might find this, as an example but not limited to the just said, where the vending system is built into the wall of a building much as are some of the ATM machines.

[0178] ii. The system may be accessed from either one or both sides in relation to carrying out a single function. This covers all ranges including but not limited to all the selections being made from one side and product is received from the same side and/or the opposite side. Each side can present entirely differently with any or all of the single and/or combined parts of the machine but that they are tied together in some fashion and one "plays" off of the other.

[0179] iii. The system may exist in the aisles of a grocery store so long as a buyer of a product cannot leave the store without payment.

[0180] (1) Especially critical with custom products

[0181] (2) It is possible for there to exist in a store whereby individual products can be vended and products selected from the shelves and paid for at one port of payment.

[0182] (a) It is invented whereby you can enter a venue that sells many products but payment is with one single transaction.

[0183] (b) It is invented here the terminology, motivational buying with the goal being that the more you buy the greater the rewards. Basically whereby that by one method of payment discounts are taken for the incremental amounts of monies spent, and/or rewarding is effectuated by any means.

[0184] Motivational buying is hereby invented to expand to the ability to enter a store with many departments and/or even a shopping center whereby your participation and/or you purchases total to one tab.

[0185] d. There is no limitation on products, nor product categories as to the methodology of dispensing, be it from one machine or more.

[0186] e. There is no limitation as to size, shape, complexity, and/or any other limiting restriction.

[0187] f. It is here also covered here that a home version can exist and be filed by, as example the parents. This can be fun for recreational rooms parties.

[0188] 5. Support Member is defined as anything, regardless of material, size shape, color, amount of parts and/or
components, manually operated and/or power sourced, color, and or the like that brings forth one or more of the following: information, enjoyment, entertainment, edutainment, motivation to use the product, increases product chances of success, supports the use of the product (functionality), services advertising and/or promotional potentials, reward potential, serves to expose more products to more people, serves to sell more products to more people and/or the like.

[0189] Smart Card for Smart Vending or Smart Experience Vending as defined by this inventor is a card, regardless of material etc. that has more than one function so that when it is presented to a system the system reacts in one or more fashions.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0190] The following description is provided to enable any person skilled in the art to make and use the invention and sets forth the best modes contemplated by the inventor of carrying out this invention. Various modifications, however, will remain readily apparent to those skilled in the art, since the general principles of the present invention have been defined herein specifically to provide improved methods for use with vending systems.

[0191] Presented herein is a vending system comprising one or more machines in one or more locations, using one or more technologies, which can communicate with each other and can transmit information concerning the vending system’s activities to one or more parties, such as the system’s owners, participating vendors and/or sponsor and the like. This vending system allows a consumer to create a customized product, one unit at a time or in multiples, which incorporates features or components created or chosen by the consumer. Product categories may include food and beverages, clothing and accessories, social expression cards, music delivery systems, and the like.

[0192] While one vending system is new and novel, the inventor also wishes to emphasize the expansive possibilities of interconnected systems.

[0193] An analogy might be that while one department in a department store may be unique, many unique departments are united in various ways in a specific area, regardless of size, placement or configuration, either indoors, outdoors or both.

[0194] Because these vending systems are modular, they can be moved, changed, expanded, etc.

[0195] Because many options within a system are digitally controlled, they can be changed by one or more operators from on-premise or off-premise locations. Therefore, conceived herein is a consortium of vending systems transmitting and/or receiving data to each other, locally, nationally or internationally, from one or more central locations.

[0196] This invention combines and/or encourages participation, active, passive, and/or interactive, to contribute an added, and/or perceived value experience for the user(s) as well as the owners and/or operators, while offering the ability to buy and/or create a custom product for purchase, (tangible and/or intangible) regardless if delivery is immediate and on site, or later delivered to a real and/or cyber-space point of receivership.

[0197] New equipment allows for new business. This vending system focuses on the ability to customize products (more individualization) and for business the ability to introduce and sell new products, broader range of the ability to test market new products, and also provide a broader distribution channel. One can easily go national within a vending system far easier than one can go through supermarkets etc. with the need of inventories and slotting fees, and co-operation advertising. Field of the invention

[0198] This invention provides for one or more of the following: multimedia features, new product delivery technologies, labeling, and packaging technologies, along with accompanying business models, methods, and opportunities whereby the system(s) dispense(s) products that are meant to work in consort, or systems that are to work in consort, regardless of the field of inventing.

[0199] This invention, vending system, presents a new and novel way of, what the inventor calls, vending convergence with ancillary opportunities. (Convergence as defined in the dictionary means to meet at a point) The underlying summary here is to present totally new and novel ways of presenting product(s) components, multiple abilities to develop new product(s), enrich existing product(s) in an informative, creative, entertaining educating environment.

[0200] As vending operations do not require much hiring of personnel therefore affording more individualization at a lower cost while deviating from the one size fits all it affords, for an example, an individual and/or an entity to custom build a proprietary product etc. to be used as a prototype/resume, to accompany a resume presentation in the context of “here is what I can do”, a contest entry, and/or any of the like.

[0201] This system will provide new and novel product(s) which arise from a new and novel opportunities, distribution of product(s), business methods, models, and opportunities as related to product(s), information (disseminated and collected), advertising, promotions and cross-promotions, entertainment, edutainment (educating), communication, identification and qualification modalities, and/or the like. The vending machine system will include novel packaging unit designs, and/or already designed packaging unit designs but delivered, and/or used, in new and novel ways. Additionally having, independently or in consort, multiple capabilities employing multiple technologies which may fall into one or more of the categories of active, reactive, interactive; whereby multiple components of converging technical capabilities, regardless of modality, manually operated and/or in combination with one or more power sources, one or more power sources; even wireless, in part and/or in whole providing for and/or for the delivery of product(s), promotions, advertising, entertainment, education, entertainment, and/or the like.

[0202] For the most part, vending machines do not offer a complete range of possibilities in a systematic changeable and/or interchangeable system, context, and environment, delivering real product(s) intangibles or both while influencing users in a positive motivational fashion.

[0203] We have a society where, because of mainly advances in electronics consumers are use to so many choices, the ability to combine technologies to have the competitive edge, ergo for personal care and also for prof-
Itability. We also know that we are a convenience-based society whereby ease of use, multi-functional opportunities and convenience as a time saver is critical in doing business today. In an age of advancing technologies where a multiplicity of functions can happen from a small hand held unit we look at these giant machines and know they can do far more.

[0204] The opportunity for a single individual as a consumer or an owner is enormous opportunities. (even a child or a health challenge/disabled person), multiple individuals, as well as the smallest organization to Fortune 100 Companies worldwide; to initiate all that is present in this invention.

[0205] This invention is geared to provide more equal opportunities and provide more power and control to the individual as there are no huge financial barriers, ethnic prejudices, while providing for more customization, satisfying more needs goals and desires. I look at just nutritive additives to water, beverages of foods we can see this. An example would be where you go to buy orange juice and you can have orange juice with one or more of the following additives, calcium, vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Not only is the consumer confused by this fractionalization, it is very difficult for supermarkets and the like supermarket such venuses to carry so many choices. Shelf space is at a premium and eye level space is at an even greater premium.

[0206] In this invention new products and/or product options have a greater chance of success and they are not buried within the system. Further more information about each product is provided o a display or a print out.

[0207] For the inventory the understanding of the beverage business is important with the cost of bring a Ready To Drink Product to market where shipping alone is eight pounds a gallon. This is not even including being bottling plant dependent. Additionally stores do not have shelf space especially for cold space. So to add an enormous range of products in restricted environments such as movie theaters, on airplanes, on trains, on a ship, food courts, fast food, convenience venuses, school and hospital cafeterias and/or the like is virtually impossible.

[0208] In recent years single stores or chain operations have opened to sell coffee with all kinds of various additives and creative bets. The most known chain is Starbucks® which in addition to all their coffee options has expanded to tea options. There are now chains of juice and smoothie stores carrying fresh juices, blended juices, and smoothies with the potential of adding additional health related additives, such as: minerals, vitamins, energy enhancers, protein, soy, fiber, and/or the like at the cost of about $.50 per shot. The result is that the consumer now has a customized product, by their design, to address their needs and/or desires.

[0209] If one looks closely one will notice that the coffee etc. houses are not appropriate for children and/or even teen agers for the obvious. The juice establishments are really not for children either, if for no other reason than the density and intensity of the product offerings, and/or the size of the portions served if one was not to waste.

[0210] On the positive side these coffee and juice/smoothie operations have been able to also address a space restraint problem as more diverse products (combinations) can be produced in far less space as compared to the stocking of RTD drinks. The inventor has just described very successful operations in the drink/liquid category which illustrates the consumer wants variety and is willing to pay for variety, and has exemplified the tremendous business booming around customization.

On Customization

[0211] Consumers want to customize products and/or information in the same way as they personalize their computers. The inventor here calls this the “consumer in charge generation” This consumer in charge element provides, besides personal control, a competitive edge, a deeper motivational reason to use the machine, ergo a sound business advantage over competitors.

[0212] Customization, while most desired and even needed has not been available, mainstream, and if so with a very high price ticket and only affordable by those of means.

[0213] As related to the just mentioned coffee/tea and juice/smoothie establishments one has to patronize them and that means that the aforesaid establishments have to have an investment in real estate and at only certain well populated locations Sometimes parking costs alone are equal to, or even more than, the hefty price that the product(s) the consumer buys in one of these venuses.

[0214] This system allows, not just customization and/or the ability to address target specific desires, needs, health challenges and/or the like but to provide the just said in more locations for a lower cost with more options.

[0215] A main goal of this invention is to provide easy access to customization, at a reduced cost of custom of product, dedicated to the mass-market consumer, while at the same time be profitable for the manufacturer;

[0216] With the discovery and introduction of many more healthy ingredients to the marketplace it is known that these ingredients need to find a home within a finished product.

[0217] This inventor looks at these machines as mini personalizing factories playing to customization and also with the opportunity of affording positive motivation to double reinforce health, safety, and satisfy the customer.

[0218] With a smart card, which has or has not and financial transaction abilities personal information can be imbedded that will allow “extras” and/or restrict/prohibit certain activity. It is a serious goal of this inventor that this invention, vending system, accentuate the positive and, and if when possible, provide reward(s)/compensation for those who make healthy and/or healthier choices.

[0219] Translating Abilities

[0220] With the world, and especially the United States, being populated with so many from foreign lands who are living or traveling here (non-English-speaking), along with the hearing challenged (deaf), having information made available from these systems in audible English is not user friendly to this population. This invention is expanded to include the showing of movies (film), television, therefore broadcasting of all audio visual mediums is also to be considered an “add-on” item to the vending system.

[0221] The invention is further expanded to visual language without audio, and covers any territory whereby
technology allows, through glasses, or using electronics, the opportunity to read indicia, mainly text language, in one or more languages and/or images not visible to the naked eye, such as a sign, a hang tag on a garment, and/or the like.

[0222] It is therefore an object of this invention that there be special consideration for the aforesaid using embedded text, and/or simultaneously broadcasting readable text in one or more languages at the same time which is not visible to the naked eye.

[0223] For illustrative purposes, referenced here is the use of 3-D glasses, which transform an image from what is seen with the “naked eye,” adding dimension.

[0224] In an audio-visual production for the deaf, this invention presents whereby wearing glasses permits text in one or more languages (and perhaps some images which might have meaning to those who speak one language that would be better expressed with different images for those who speak a different language) to be visible so that they can read what others can hear. This would allow a deaf person to go to the vending system and participate just as a non hearing impaired individual would be able to do.

[0225] In the movie format, a deaf person can sit next to a person with normal hearing so they can equally enjoy the film. The hearing individual will hear the words and the deaf individual would be able to read the words, closed-captioning, symbols etc. through the glasses. They can enjoy the same production with the only differentiating factor being that the deaf would wear glasses.

[0226] The above also applies to anyone who does not speak the language of the audio portion of a presentation. It is conceivable that, as an example, 5 people all speaking different native languages attend the same production and by wearing the glasses they each can have their language of choice be made available on an individual basis. This plays into the overall theme of these systems, which is customization.

[0227] Printed text, on such things as hang tags or advertising, could be printed in such a way that multiple languages are embedded in the printing and only one is visible at a time, and the glasses adjusted in such a way that the glasses screen out all but the text in the desired language. It is also conceivable that items such as the above which are currently printed using paper and ink might in the future comprise programmable displays with which the glasses could interact to select the appropriate language.

[0228] From the production side this will allow more features to be seen by more people at the same time as one travels the globe or does not know another language especially of the country they live in.

[0229] For educational purposes this invention serves as a tool for learning another language. If another language is being learned the student has the option of hearing the language desired, and images, along with reading the corresponding verbiage in a language they understand.

[0230] A possible means, but not limited to this methodology, would involve the use of one or more electronic devices (computing), and if this invention is for movie/television watching, then it is conceived that the visual portion would be projected and the subtitling would be handled by the computers. The glasses would denote the language(s).

[0231] Programmable glasses may be made available for one or more languages/purposes etc. by a venue for free or for a charge. A proprietary programming format may be used so that, for example, glasses usable in one movie theater chain will not work in another. Another option is that an individual have his/hers own glasses and if needed have their personal prescription built in.

[0232] Another object of the invention is to converge the technologies of music, with or without visuals (still images and/or video), along with the principle of advertising, promotions and cross-promotions into a finished product with or without the vending of an actual product.

An Example would be PepsiCo’s Contract with Britney Spears.

[0233] This also provides additional job opportunities even for the disabled as that health-challenged individual might only have the responsibility of stocking the unburned non-scribed cards, CD’s, DVD’s and/or the like.

[0234] In addition to normally considered real estate appropriate locations this opportunity will open up (as do other parts of this invention) target specific and appropriate locations. According to this example placement such as a music store (chain, co/partnering like Blockbusters® Tower Records) is very appropriate.

[0235] It also serves to bring in customers who hopefully will shop and purchase more merchandise.

The Model:

[0236] 1a. An existing album is produced with a pre-recorded song/jingle advertising the company’s product (Pepsi) and when the album is purchases Pepsi can offer a free drink.

[0237] 1b. When the drink is purchased compensation may be adjusted to reduced cost for the purchase of the album.

[0238] 2. It is conceived that a customer be able to take an album which only contains the prerecord advertisement and then from a selection of Britney’s material customize an album. (The above drink combination of beverage with purchase interfacing may or may not be a part of this version.)

[0239] 3. The pre-recorded be a message and not a song or a jingle.

[0240] 4. One or more of the following be used and/or used in combination on the album one or more times according to the discretion of the owning company.

[0241] 5. Any of the following or more than one combination of the following message, jingle or song be repeated one or more times, sequentially or at intervals, whereby any artist can have material selected by the customer and or pre-exist on an album.

[0242] A message may be a charity information, etc. This obviates compensation for the product with or without the delivery of a vended product from the same or different company (cross promotion). Any other recording artists whose work is available in this machine (through this venue).
Way to Promote New Talent

[0243] Customer can add own recording to the composition. Follows same as rest of this description as far as duplicating etc.

[0244] System can provide added photo opportunity. This presents a co-venture and can include even more additional relationship activity such as the venue. If in a chain specific venue, if a photo addition then with a photo company such as Kodak® company, the recording company for which Brittany is contracted under, the computer company whose programs and hard drive and software are used, and/or the like. If a photo potential then there can be the restocking of appropriate materials needed etc.

[0245] If a recording artist want to know what songs are the most popular for the production of an album then this is a test market business opportunity while making money at the same time. This inventor has repeatedly, through many of her inventions used test marketing to pay for itself in, part in whole, and even for a profit through broad channels of distribution.

[0246] It is an advertising amortization opportunity for PepsiCo in this instance in many ways, one being that the cost of paying for her representation comes back through selling her image singing etc. Also by bringing in other sponsoring companies they can be charged proportionally as one would be in acting as a landlord to participate. It is confirmed here that while this is directed towards a disabled intent it is not limited to. In fact it is a perfect opportunity to give an average person a chance at being a business operator.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

[0247] To avoid unnecessary duplication of many of the same options provided by this invention, the inventor notes that any machine/system may incorporate applicable features interchangeably with any other invention (machine/system) contained herein.

[0248] It is an object of the invention to provide a personal medical and/or data card with selective/restrictive purchasing abilities:

[0249] a. Provides for a personal medical data card (item) that can be read by the machine by any means.

[0250] i. Restricts and/or prohibits the vending of specific items and/or additives for health reasons (example: diabetics, allergies, contraindications to medications etc.)

[0251] ii. If the product(s) vended meets the requirements for any credits/reimbursement (insurance, etc.) it will be automatically deducted from the cost of the product, and/or provide a method to issue documentation so that the user can use it appropriately. (examples: print out a receipt, transfer data electronically etc.)

[0252] iii. The card can also have any payment ability.

[0253] It is an object of the invention to provide a point of location for emergency and/or medical assistance (911, fire, police etc.).

[0254] a. Provides for one or two way communication (send a signal/automatic connecting with open channels to an emergency operator). The data on the card can be retrieved by the attending Emergency Agency/Aid, regardless of form, and/or forwarded to a medical facility.

[0255] b. If the machine is stocked with emergency medical aids such as insulin etc. there may be emergency functions, which will permit dispensing (obviates the need for close monitoring and controlled rules).

[0256] c. In addition to general uniform emergency contact abilities, the card may have the ability to contact any entity for which it is programmed (especially valuable for children, seniors, and the health challenged).

[0257] d. In addition and/or in place of restrictions, rewards for healthy selections may also be programmed into the card.

[0258] i. While the user (such as a child) could be prohibited from buying certain products, due to any restrictions, they may also be rewarded for a healthy selection, positive reinforcement. (the reward might be the ability to play a game for free)

[0259] ii. Seniors too, may have restricted cards as governed by their doctor and/or health care practitioner.

[0260] iii. Restrictive cards especially those that are health challenged, and/or language challenged, and/or those with specific needs and/or those on medications are most needed. (product labeling has importance but also might be very challenging and/or not provide enough necessary information)

[0261] It is an object of the invention to use personal, body part, recognition for activating system and/or verifying identities.

[0262] a. Far surpassing codes cards and/or the like (which can be stolen or passed around) other means of identification might be used such as fingerprint matching and/or eye recognition.

[0263] b. Fingerprint recognition (every print that touches the machine may be recorded) will allow the potential of finding lost children or catching criminals by tracing them through the vending system so that lost children, criminals, etc. can be traced through this vending system.

[0264] c. Same premise with eye recognition. (recorded when in front of the machine making a choice)

[0265] d. As in a very large amusement park a child can have a card for that park which allows that child privileges to use the vending and access areas and rides. (child tracker such as at a place like a Disneyland® but also to train a child that if lost he/she can go to the system to be identified and whereabouts discovered.

[0266] e. Value in locating criminals and/or track their usages as criminals are on the run might be more apt to using vending machines rather than go into an establishment whereby they might be recognized.

[0267] It is an object of the invention to create a vending system comprising one or more machines in one or more locations, using one or more technologies, which can communicate with each other and can transmit information concerning the vending system's activities to one or more parties, such as the system's owners, participating vendors and/or sponsor and the like. This vending system allows a consumer to create a customized product, one unit at a time.
or in multiples, which incorporates features or components chosen or created by the consumer. Product categories may include food and beverages, clothing and accessories, social expression cards, music delivery systems, and the like. EXAMPLES (partially described here or fully described here):

[0268] a. Cooking, as an example, whereby to purchase all the needed ingredients spices etc. for a one person meal might be very expensive and/or then much may go to waste.

[0269] b. Jewelry, such as a charm bracelet whereby you can select the bracelet and buy one charm at a time (in craft stores you have to buy sometimes a bag of several when you only need one).

[0270] c. Entry in more than one form of identification and/or a combination of identifying means may be required.

[0271] d. Provides the customer has the ability to observe as well as listen to the production process by having the ability to watch the process occur on a video screen and/or hear information through a audio system. Also the ability to watch through a clear panel most likely glass or a composite of clarity.

[0272] e. A greeting card, also called sometimes a social expression card, vending system combined with personal photo machine, and/or the addition of sound into this greeting system with advertising, promotional, and/or reward opportunities. Further with the ability to make one or more customized units on and/or off site.

[0273] i. With consideration to U.S. Pat. No. 5,056,029 to Thomas G. Cannon, (Onkor Ltd. (Loveland Colo.), titled; System for printing social expression cards in response to electronically transmitted orders. The Cannon patent discloses a method wherein a customer is queried to elicit responses, in the form of occasion parameters, each of which relates to the customer’s intended purpose. This invention provides an efficient means for printing many different types of social expression cards and for retrieving and displaying those card designs which match a customer's criteria.

[0274] ii. Just as websites have banners that advertise it is possible for these cards to also include a huge potential for advertising, promotions, rewards, and/or the like to be part of this new invention. Companies are always looking to advertise (reach consumers) in new and novel ways. While sometimes brand placement is various obvious it is also conceived that it not be as obvious (as direct in your face).

[0275] iii. Greeting cards as a vehicle for incorporating advertisements, etc. with any type of indicia (Examples would be if there is a replica of a rendering a child children are eating this is a place for product branding and/or product placement without compromising the visual of the card or compromising the integrity of the product.

[0276] iv. Other examples would be a subliminal logo imbedded or the like (CBS lower right corner their logo on their TV channel) Also for cross advertising with a compatible joint venture company (Disney and McDonald’s as an example)

[0277] v. If a company has their brand tied into a personality of recognition etc. they both can be incorporated into the card. (Naturally royalties will be commensurate if used.)

[0278] vi. The customer may have her/his picture taken and that picture be incorporated into the product with or without indicia, advertising etc. potential.

[0279] f. One can bring any art and/or picture to the machine to be scanned into the system to be incorporated in whole and/or in part into the finished product.

[0280] g. There can be a combination of scanned art as well as real photography

[0281] h. A single unit may be produced (perhaps considered a master) which can be duplicated by the entity owning the equipment, or by any contractual agreement, on site or at another location

[0282] i. Good use of this would be in holiday cards whereby the item produced can act as a master to be duplicated by any means for the purpose of duplicating in quantity. (Please note objectives of photo opportunities)

[0283] ii. System can relay information to an off site reproduction facility for immediate or future duplication (royalties if called for will remain in place for duplications).

[0284] It is an object of the invention to personalize the photo opportunity.

[0285] a. Any graphic technology is considered to apply, including but not limited to 3 D, rotational abilities and angle shootings, shadowing, silhouetting, etc. and these images may be directly used on any surface and/or be transferable to an object by having the backing and/or any other ability to attach, by the requirements of the process.

[0286] b. Printing can be in relief, for artistic purposes or for such purposes as marketing to the blind (which may or may not incorporate Braille).

[0287] c. Personalized information introduced by the buyer can be duplicated so that for each use the personalized information there is an additional charge opportunity. This is very applicable for the visual as well as the audio market.

[0288] d. The personalized information introduced by the buyer can be so introduced by interfac ing the machine/system with a compatible storage medium or device, such as a disk, personal digital assistant or the like, with or without additional charge.

[0289] e. By incorporating other technologies into its base product, a company can expand its product line. As an example, to add sound to greeting cards, Hallmark® can contract with audio companies for sounds, or other media companies for other material, or it can expand into audio or other media businesses as the owning entity.

[0290] i. Making a totally new composition card (calendar, diary, etc.) or any object that is based on a Hallmark property or a joint business effort can be made from a stand alone machine and/or is part of a larger system, regardless where it is placed, for cross promotions and/or to amortize costs.

[0291] (1) This card (etc.) can printed-out on the spot, or sent remotely, as a single card, and/or serve as a sample for mass production to one or more facilities on a per need per project basis.

[0292] (2) If the item is not generated immediately it can be produced and sent to the user-decided location(s).
ii. One can use an existing Hallmark format or a totally personal production, or a combination; then if desired the material can be altered by the user within the limitations of intellectual properties and/or permission-giving devices (payment or other qualifications etc.). This card (designed unit) can serve as a sample for mass production and/or sent to the company as a proposed product for their use.

f. This also serves a business model whereby a company such as Hallmark can use this opportunity to get their own and/or shared mini-satellite venues with their own brand and/or share the opportunity with a compatible entity . . . ergo their name gets out in more public aware venues.

g. Additionally, Hallmark may have a stable of personalists whose images are in the machine and/or available via the Internet.

iii. An individual’s photo may be incorporated in the product with the personalists, therefore generating multiple business opportunities. Stars can get royalties on a contractual basis directly and/or have them totally or partially deferred to another entity, like a charitable organization.

(1) In some instances the “star” might also be a recording artist for which the user may decide to use on or more than one option. There might be the need for compensation to the agent and or the recording company, movie studio, etc.

b. Enhancement properties, such as aromas or customized audio, can be added to the photo experience, either immediately per the capabilities of the system, or as a special order, in which instance the company may choose to send a sample for approval before the order is filled.

It is an object of the invention to have a photo machine/photo booth, with or without sound capabilities that may, or may not, add audio to the finished product regardless of the technology, and which work in consort, tandem, simultaneously, at random, or any single or combination of the just mentioned, with the vending machine(s), with or without any other part of the invention also being included.

Photography and the photo machines are a part of our culture. The black and white photo-taking machines, whereby the user would get a strip of four pictures, was the beginning of a new wave of photo machines. Certainly bringing in color and variable sizes in the photos, and then with the addition of interchangeable backdrops, to frame the user with an additional image, which the consumer can control/select, are public domain.

One or more companies can have the backdrop related to their corporate image, their spokesperson(s), and/or the like, available in the photo machine and thereby incorporated into the resulting images generated. The final product created may be realized on any medium which can either be stocked within the system (such as labels, iron-on transfers, etc.), or ordered for delivery to the buyer later (such as coffee mugs or any large quantity of a printable item). An example is the situation of a photo label for a canned soft drink.

The photo chosen is dispensed exactly to the shape of whatever item the user chooses—in this example, a can of soda. Now the user puts his/her picture (or the pet too) on a can of soda. If used with the company signature, say PepsiCo, then there will be PepsiCo advertising. The cans can become collector items; therefore they will save the trashing and “gabring” the planet. PET bottles especially are cause a big problem and many dollars to clean the environment.

Further, if this drink is dispensed cold, the label may be backed with a foam and/or an appropriate material (for the same price and/or an additional price) of a cold retention/or a heat retention material. The drink will ultimately stay cooler and or hotter longer with the protection, which is a part of the inventiveness of the label.

Pricing is up to the company whereby a picture can be so much, additional for text, additional for sound . . . builds a consumer product with extras (like buying a car and adding on the additional features). Even given for free or any other type of business arrangement apropos to the circumstances and out come.

The image can also, for the same price, additional price, etc. be constructed so that it can be transferred to any item such as a tee shirt, a coffee mug etc. The buyer will need to specify transfer product so that the printing can be appropriate (size graded), etc. Because the same image is to be used on a variety of items, the cost of creating the image is amortized over the cost of all the items generated.

Depending on the transferring capability of the machine/system and/or the availability of desired components, the image may need to be electronically sent to a factory, where the product is made and then delivered or picked up by the customer later. The user may have a choice of more than one image, text, sound, which can be selected from a display. The customer is able to see the picture on the item and authorize approval, thus giving the consumer a more realistic view of the to-be-completed work.

The consumer may receive “on the spot” a printout of the image created and/or picture of the final product which includes the image created, with the product be received later on, by delivery or consumer pickup. This allows the customer to go home with the picture immediately while waiting for the product. This printout may be included in the purchase or offered for an extra charge.

Sponsoring corporations using these products as an advertising medium may absorb part of the cost of the product. Thus, if a consumer elects to use one or more corporate image on his/her item, the cost of the item to the consumer may be lowered or, theoretically, even free.

The resulting image will put the consumer-selected image in the same frame as a company’s image, thus creating a bond in the consumer’s mind between the consumer-selected image and the corporate image. This resulting image can be sent to the company electronically, or by any means, for the purpose of being used commercially under guidelines accepted by both parties. Thus, the machine can be a way for the company’s promoters to discover new talent.

One or more companies can have text relative to their corporate image, their spokesperson(s), and/or the like, available in the photo machine, and/or offer the user/buyer the option of creating his/her own messages. Additionally, text can be a replacement for a design, and/or added to the backdrop design along with the photo picture (the user’s choice).
[0311] There can be choices of text messages and/or the user can make up an original text message. If the user makes up the text message then it can be stored in the computer so that the company can see the messages that have been created, with or without the originator’s contact information. This can provide a company with original talent for which they would normally pay ad agencies serious dollars to create. Further, they can compensate the originator if the message is used.

[0312] By offering a selection of corporate-generated messages, the company can test-market those messages, alone and/or with the photo selected. This is so valuable to a company in relation to picking a slogan, a message, a logo line and/or the like serves as a test market. A company may offer a product for free or for a reduced price if the user completes a customer survey, with the option of identifying himself. Thus, the company creates a database of valuable marketing information.

[0313] There can be different fonts, different sizes of fonts, different colors, bolded, italics, and the like, which are created by the machine under the user’s choice and design. While a consumer is engaged in designing his or her customized product, a company may offer the opportunity for the consumer to purchase another product, such as a beverage or snack. In exchange for marketing information being collected during the process and by virtue of the consumer’s choices, this secondary purchase may be offered either for free or for a reduced price. The secondary product may be delivered by the same machine or by another machine in the system.

[0314] The inventive system creates feedback for test marketing, for example, of new products, new concepts, new designs, product introduction into a new market and the like. This is possible because:

   [0315] i. the vending machines/system can provide feedback to the vendor company;

   [0316] ii. the location of the machines/system can be readily changed;

   [0317] iii. the vending machines/system can be reconfigured easily and quickly so that a product can be sold more easily than in a traditional venue; and

   [0318] iv. an immediate reward can be offered to the consumer in exchange for his/her participation in the test, such as a free or reduced cost product upon completion of a product selection and/or survey.

[0319] For example, in an advertisement background, company can test which movie star or Super-hero is preferred, by having several different ones in the machine for the buyer to choose. This is a tool of value for the company who does not know whether to spend money on a costly license or the hiring of a super star and/or spokes person. Also important for ethnic preferences.

[0320] The inventive system allows the user to make one or more personalized postage stamps from any appropriate venue. While it is known to locally print postage, the art does not provide the ability to produce personalized and customized official postage.

[0321] Vending personalized postage stamps with the image of the individual on the stamp from a Post Office location and/or by a company endorsed by and working with the Post Office of any country. The price for this produce would naturally include a premium beyond the price of the postage, and will serve to enhance the revenues for the Post Office (of any country) and/or the printing company designated by the Post Office to own and/or operate the machines.

[0322] The Post Office can set one or more features of the resulting stamps as an authentication means, such as approved paper, ink, perforation pattern or the like. The personalized stamps can sold in any quantity and in any denomination or combination of denominations.

[0323] Method of operation may vary using the technologies by those skilled in the art. Guidelines and/or similar are provided here. From a home computer one can send a picture to a company for reproduction on a medium with the appropriate authentications means, and payment as requested by the modalities accepted. Then the stamps are sent to the buyer.

[0324] Additionally one can pre-buy the materials needed for authentication, and print the stamps on home computers, office, etc. However, one can go into a vending picture booth and order the same, by taking a picture on the spot, or bringing a picture to the booth and feeding the image to the machine and the image is printed out the medium with the appropriate authentication means.

[0325] The backdrop of a company for product identification may be used and the stamps may even be discounted as a trade-off for advertising. Certain star personalities may lend their image into the photo stamp process, for royalties, charity or the like. From any appropriate venue, stamps for use in another country can also be generated, by any means, assuming availability of the medium with the appropriate authentication means.

[0326] Certainly this will create business for the Post Office, as there will be individuals who will continue and/or go back to mailing letters to use the stamps. While it may be a gimmick it is very valuable to the Postal System in increasing revenues. One can even make postage, which is related/appropriate to another countries monetary system.

[0327] Another use of the vending system is to make personalized currency from any appropriate venue. Just as this is invented for the postal system, it may also apply to money. One can pre-buy the paper or other medium containing authentication means from the bank and/or any appropriate institution in person or as in mail order.

[0328] The government gets the money purchase, then the user can print whatever is desired on the authenticating medium, so long as the denomination is clear, accurate, and appropriate to all governing laws. This can be incorporated into objects which are not currency but have a monetary value, such as chips in a Las Vegas casino.

[0329] This would allow the printing of foreign currency as well, so in anticipation of travel one could print out money in advance. This can be generated from an owner/user port and/or a public machine.

[0330] The inventive vending system can also be used for the making of a sponsored personalized media collection product containing a consumer's selections, as with a jukebox, from digitally stored music, entertainment, educational programming, still images (including picture, graphics, text,
and/or the like individually and or combined in any fashion), audio only, and/or a combination of any of the above, and also containing advertising from one or more sponsoring entities, either at a single point or interspersed throughout the medium.

[0331] In “background of the invention” many technologies are referenced. This example is based on the original concept of a jukebox, whereby many musical selections are stored and a customer can, for compensation, make selections. This invention makes background use of this principle only. We are very aware that the world is going towards customization, and that many problems have existed, and do exist, with the illegal infringements of copyrights and intellectual properties and/or the like. An example of this is in the music, television, entertainment, and/or information business whereby from any of the broadcasting of the just mentioned an individual can duplicate without re-numeration for the owning entity. One of the problems, aside from the illegality of the just said, is that with duplication technology, often the quality is not professional. Another is the time it may take to make say a personalized cassette where you have to start and stop many albums, or wait for them to be played publicly, etc. to create your personalized product. This invention solves all that and more.

[0332] a. The collection can be delivered to the consumer in one or more copies.

[0333] b. The collection can be made and delivered instantly, or sent to the consumer later.

[0334] c. This is a new business opportunity and model and method whereby an artist, recording, and/or the like gets paid royalties per selection.

[0335] d. This is a new business opportunity and model and method whereby an artist, recording, and/or the like can be featured (promoted, advertised) in any fashion. As an example, there can be a reduced cost to the consumer for the product if the consumer picks a selection from a new category of artists in a special section.

[0336] e. The recording company can use this method before they sign a new artist(s) to their entity.

[0337] f. This is a new business opportunity and model and method whereby it is a test marking opportunity for a new artist(s) to test their material.

[0338] g. This is a new business opportunity and model and method whereby it is a test marking opportunity for an already popular artist(s) to test new material.

[0339] h. This is a new business opportunity and model and method whereby it is possible to create a machine specifically for the featuring of unsigned talent.

[0340] i. This is a new business opportunity and model and method whereby the machines/system can serve as a miniature talent agency whereby the public decides if they want to buy, who they want to buy, which of their selection they want to buy, if more that one selection is by an artist(s) is presented.

[0341] j. It is conceived that the user/buyer makes a choice and then it is transmitted to that individual’s web site, e-mail and/or the like so that it is retained in that venue, as well as being delivered to a physical address.

[0342] k. This must be handled carefully as there are artists right and the best modality would be for a one time use.

[0343] For multiple uses a duplication charge may be in order. There is not an immediate duplication charge then the company is contacted and they send the amount of duplications requested with the correct charging. There might be a sliding scale for larger increments of purchase and/or the like.

[0344] The inventive system provides an expanded franchising opportunity that provides all the opportunities that a big companies have to an individual person. The franchise, comprising the vending system, can be moved to another location. The system can be cost sensitive and more modules (machines) can be added if successful. If it is not successful in one location it may be transported to another location. Further it can exist within the confines of a trailer and be moved with very little commitment.

[0345] The vending system, because of its unique features, provides unique opportunities for franchisors.

[0346] Product diversity

[0347] Expansion

[0348] Customizable, by module, by products

[0349] One franchisor’s system can communicate with another franchisor’s system for mutual gain.

[0350] Not only does the buyer have the opportunity to buy one item but by the ability to duplicate this is added business for the owner of the franchise.

[0351] Vending in general is not labor intensive, may be open 24 hours a day and function even on the days the sun doesn’t shine, thus reducing the number of employees.

[0352] Products can be interchanged within one machine (sodas can go to snacks). This allows the proprietor flexibility in merchandise.

[0353] Many franchises can use one duplicating facility as a sound economic business model.

[0354] The machine configuration can be changed or even moved to another location if production is not up to par.

[0355] Such an opportunity can attract a greater audience as well as provide more changeability and mobility.

[0356] Provides opportunities for new product introduction as well as consumer visibility as compared to going into a store with slotting fees and so many units necessary to fill the shelf.

[0357] Opens up opportunities for new and more distributors.

[0358] Promotes entrepreneurship: As more franchises open, more distribution opportunities, product
display opportunities, and more jobs are created. More people are able to have their own unique business.

[0359] Can start out very small with one system; as it becomes profitable, more modules can be added.

[0360] Units can be set up in other countries.

[0361] 15. The inventive system is ideal for sample-making or prototyping. Many countries encourage inventiveness, especially the United States. However, many designers are hampered in their ability to design products because they do not have the funds to set up a situation that is cost-effective for sample-making and/or production in what will at first most likely be limited quantities.

[0362] The inventive machine(s) may make one or more samples, easily allowing for the change in the composition of the product, may offer a copy of the specifications (in printed or digital form) of the sample product, its components, pattern and configuration, retain the specifications of the product in the machine for duplication, transmit the specifications to any entity, date- and time-stamp the conception of the product, produce one or more samples or even short runs, allow for the product to be duplicated in larger runs by a manufacturing entity, order quantities to be used personally or distribute as promotions, sell and/or any combination to test consumer compliance and/or acceptability.

[0363] These machines may or may not be tied into a central data information bank, regardless of where they are in the world, so that when a product specification is recorded, “first use” or “first disclosure” is established for the inventor. The system can identify (1) suppliers for materials and components and (2) production facility options. Using the vending system, suppliers and manufacturers can be contacted immediately and bids submitted for even small production runs.

[0364] Then, if the product is successful, it can be introduced into the consumer marketplace through any channel.

[0365] The inventive vending system can be one machine, multiple machines, and/or what is commonly known as kiosks (whether they be ones that you approach and/or enter as an entertainment venue) which may be attached to another object(s) and/or stand alone, whereby there may also be one or more ports of entry, for one or more persons to form a surround-around vending system, and/or elongated system, and/or any footprint and/or any size of amount of components dispensing, in whole or in part, vended items from the same category and/or separate categories, be they related or not, with all user interfaces having a consistent format for ease of use.

[0366] The vended product may originate (be made) from a home computer and/or an electronic device. The final product may be tangible or intangible and delivered in any means be it immediate and/or in the future. Just as in any duplication, there is a cost per unit and if the invention is distributed to more than one recipient the cost will increase proportionately. To reduce the possibility of illegal copying measures can be used whereby tracking many options are available.

[0367] The system dispenses items that are put together, combined, and/or the like, inside the machine and delivered immediately and/or sent to the consumer at a later date, directly, and/or for the consumer to “pick up” at a designated time and place. The system may also dispense one or more parts of a total product, to be put together at the time of vending, and/or to be taken to another location for future assembly.

Example Beverage/Food:

[0368] The machine may offer recipes and/or what would be considered formulations from which the buyer may choose the exact duplication and/or make personal alterations. Just as we have smoothie shops that give you a selection of potential combinations then additional “boosters” at an individual price. Thus, one can buy water/beverage with different additives, separately, and as many as the buyer wants in unit doses in relation to the size container. Examples include decorative pins, patches; appliques, jewelry, etc. to be put on clothing. Examples include packets of colored beads/stones/pearls, links/string, hooking/closure device, etc. to make jewelry (shown earlier).

[0369] The systems novelty potential includes, but is not limited to, displaying finished products that may light up so the machine attracts consumers, could display examples of finished products, sketched designs and/or real patterns (transferable or not) and/or photographs (product only and/or on real people, animals, both. The vending system allows for said product to be duplicated in individual units or by formulation and desire by an individual and/or company for personal and/or commercial use in larger quantities.

[0370] By hitting a “duplicate” key, the exact item just previously vended will be duplicated one or more times, in single- or multi-unit containers as desired: If, for example, the product is a hot meal to be consumed immediately, this is possible while the others (the duplications) can be packaged to go regardless of temperature requested. The vending system may work whereby one portion of a product, regardless of the category, is dispensed from one machine and other portions from one or more additional machines.

[0371] For example, one can create an entire food product and/or meal this way by building on, with or without customization: e.g., salad (with choice of dressings from one machine); noodles/potatoes (choice of toppings from one machine); the main course, e.g. steak/chicken/fish (with choice of sauce/toppings or no sauce at all from another machine); dessert (e.g. whipped cream hot fudge/caramel, nuts, fruits, from another machine) etc.

[0372] The inventive system takes into consideration that compensation must be factored into the machine before any vending takes place. The system can display a sub-total of pending purchase(s), to allow the user to revise his/her selection before final purchase.

[0373] The system can accept coupons to allow for discounting.

[0374] The product is advantageously produced internally for sanitation reasons. This invention avoids the pitfalls of exposing product to airborne or human contact pathogens.

[0375] The system can retain information pertaining to the custom selections made by the customer so that the product created can be duplicated in whatever the unit portions are desired.
Such as system can offer the opportunity for those on special diets, and/or with special needs whereby the machine will be devoted to producing products specifically for that need and/or desire (e.g. sugar control, sodium control, or cholesterol control). At the same time the system can disseminate accurate and quality information to consumers in a comfortable setting.

Consumers are bombarded with so much information, mainly from the Internet, but little knowledge and or the method of presentation. Here this invention allows print out information and/or on screen viewable in a private vending booth or in the public. (private vending, just as like in a photo booth, is possible, as some people do not like to operate in public, regardless of the reason. It is even conceived that in areas where it is hot, that the private vending opportunity be in an air-conditioned space (which can accommodate one or more machines).

Therefore, the system can provide a beverage which contains only water and additives. An example is a machine system which may contain bottled water or may be connected to a municipal water supply. When the machine system is connected to a municipal water supply, it may have the following capabilities:

- Can purify the water;
- Can regulate the temperature;
- Can be still or sparkling water.

Water can be dispensed at more than one temperature and in containers appropriate to the temperature requested.

Provide the opportunity for the consumer to receive one or more additives for the drink, and/or to mix the additives into the drinking water under sanitary conditions inside the machine.

The system can offer a variety of containers, such that a low-cost container can be included in the price of the beverage, or a premium container can be purchased directly from the vending system. The cost of the liquid and the additives to be combined with it is determined by the volume requested. It is possible for a consumer/buyer to bring his own container for which the operation offers a sanitation opportunity.

The vending machine according to this invention can deliver products from more than one company such as with tea. It is possible that the owner/operator stocks with water and provides an assortment of teas and even from more than one company . . . just as machines carry a variety of snacks and candies. Naturally with tea one would suspect that the dispensing would be in a container that can accommodate heat. By dispensing the bag separately then the buyer can make the tea to the strength desired, and brew it himself. For extra cost, additives such as milk/cream, honey or other sweeter can be purchased in pre-packaged portions for sanitary reasons.

A support member such as a stirrer, straw or spoon may also be offered.

Where municipality water comes into the machine, the water undergoes a various process or processes which will change the structure of the water such as but not limited to micro-clustering, low plasma.

It is possible to add extra oxygen to the water within the machine. It is possible to add additional health benefits to the water such as changing the molecular structure so that the cells take up the water more efficiently. It is possible to re mineralize the water or have flavor or aroma already impregnated into the water before it is put into the contained with the accepted packet additives.

The US FDA has a standard by which they identify a water with flavor. It is possible to carbonate the water. It is possible to make a light mineral water with a TDS of under 500 mg/L or a heavier mineral water with a TDS of 500 mg/L to 1500 mg/L before selecting an additive.

The system of the invention must provide the utmost capabilities of sanitation. When consumers bring their own bottles to a machine for filling the machine may or may not have a dedicated portion of the machine for sterilizing the consumers bottle before filling or after filling to be sure that the product is as sanitary as possible.

The additives when dispensed into the liquid are done so inside the machine under sanitary conditions which are either viewable to the consumer, not viewable, partly viewable. Intermittently and/or randomly viewable. Ingredients may go in to finalizing liquid from a single metered dose from a separate individualized envelope/container. Ingredients may go in, as exampled by a syringe drawing from a secure sanitary container in the designed/correct dosage, and then by means common in the art of insertion present to the liquid.

Protected doses/containers/packets(s) can be dispensed out of the machine for the consumer to add them immediately or at will in total or in part. This gives more control to the consumer to adjust the strength. This gives the consumer the ability to meter the dose (1 packet spread over 3 drinks).

If the consumer wants a much stronger drink or to take a packet home to mix off premise then additional packets may be acquired by the acceptable means most likely purchased. It is the decision of the company what exactly is to come with what price.

The system presents unit doses be they packets or any other enveloping material/container, which brings forth a specific unit dose regardless of material. The unit dose can be for one or more servings. The dose can be a completed product or can be an additive for the purpose of supplementing an existing product.

The system can provide additives specially designed to be combined with a flat liquid, additives specially designed to be combined with a carbonated liquid, and additives that can be combined either a flat liquid or a carbonated liquid. Additives are provided that are appropriate for combining with liquid at specific temperatures.

The beverage vending system can be able to detect conflicts among chosen options and disallow them, such as combining cold water with an additive appropriate only for hot water, or combining carbonated water with an additive only appropriate for flat water.

The water, beverage, food-stuff product of this invention is for humans and/or animals to be taken internally by mouth, enteral feeding, separate or in combination which contains one or more ingredients from the categories,
including but not limited to, nutraceuticals, dietary supplements, amino-acids, digestive and systemic enzymes, antioxidants, diagnostics, pre-biotics, pro-biotics, herbs, vitamins, minerals; to form a complete product or a product to fortify one or more of the following in the group known as water, beverages, food stuffs such as:

[0398] A soup, stock, bullion, consommé
[0399] Meal replacement, meal fortification, with or without viscosity changes
[0400] Milk, Non-dairy milk and yogurt drinks
[0401] Water, beverage enhancing ingredients (regardless of source),
[0402] Coffee and additives,
[0403] Tea and additives,
[0404] Soft drinks
[0405] Vegetable and vegetable flavored drinks
[0406] Beverage mixes and flavorings
[0407] Wine and wine coolers
[0408] Energy drinks
[0409] Beer and ale
[0410] HYDRAUCEUTICAL™,
[0411] Alcohol, low alcohol, alcohol substitutes,
[0412] Sake
[0413] Fruits and flavored drinks
[0414] Health drinks
[0415] Isotonic, Energy producing products
[0416] Liqueurs
[0417] New age beverages and additives,
[0418] Botanicals,
[0419] All baby products both beverages, waters, food stuffs,
[0420] All junior products beverages, waters, food stuffs,
[0421] Desserts;
[0422] Entrée mixes
[0423] Poultry and sauces
[0424] Fish and sauces
[0425] Meat and sauces
[0426] Jams, jellies, marmalades, sweet butters
[0427] Butters, margarines, spreads, condiments
[0428] Nut and seed butters
[0429] Fruits, fruit side dishes, and toppings
[0430] Popcorn and toppings
[0431] Meal replacements and special diet foods
[0432] Sauces, Pizza, pasta
[0433] Vegetable and vegetable side dishes and toppings
[0434] Sweet toppings
[0435] Snacks, other
[0436] Rice and rice side dishes and toppings
[0437] Oil, vinegars
[0438] Mixes other baking and non baking
[0439] Meals, entrees, snacks (regardless of temperature, sandwiches
[0440] Pastry and baked products
[0441] Candies, confectioneries
[0442] Chips, cookies, crackers
[0443] Bakery goods
[0444] Stuffing’s, fillings, spreads for xii and xiii
[0445] Yogurt and Yogurt imitations and toppings,
[0446] Sauces and gravies
[0447] Dairy case foods
[0448] Cheese toppings
[0449] Dips and salad toppings
[0450] aaa. Ice cream, novelties, frozen yogurt, and ices, and toppings
[0451] bbb. Custards, puddings gelatins and toppings
[0452] Catsups and mustards, hot sauces, relishes,
[0453] ddd. Spices, extracts and seasonings
[0454] eee. An additive to an existing product under the above number (62)
[0455] fff. Additive may be directed towards a specific category:
[0456] Age
[0457] Gender
[0458] Animal or human
[0459] Allergies and sensitivities
[0460] ggg. Diagnosed medical condition or challenge short term or long term including but not limited to the following:
[0461] Cold or flu
[0462] Diabetes
[0463] Glycogen storage disease
[0464] Elevated cholesterol
[0465] Weight loss, appetite suppressant
[0466] Weakened immune system
[0467] Ethnic generic sensitivities
[0468] Intolerances such as lactose
[0469] Aid digestion, breakdown of food, assimilation of nutrients
[0470] Allergies
Elicit a feeling of well being and or a desired feeling or response including but not limited to:

- Energy
- Relaxation
- Mood swings
- Stamina
- Support general good health

May add a formulation designed for diagnostic purposes humans and/or animals/pets.

- X-ray
- Dental disclosure

Object of the invention is to present in various containers such as but not limited to:

- Pouches regardless of materials
- Packets, regardless of amount of compartments as described in Stillman’s Infusion Packet Patent regardless of materials
- Vials regardless of materials
- Bottles glass or plastic regardless of materials
- Boxes regardless of materials
- Tubes regardless of materials
- Cups regardless of materials
- Bowls regardless of materials
- Bags regardless of materials
- Foils
- Cartridges regardless of materials
- Bottles caps and tops (exchangeable)
- Attached to a member such as a rock candy to a swizzle stick
- Presentation may be in various forms using interior and exterior separated and/or in combination

Object of the invention, when appropriate to the product, is to present in various forms such as but not limited to:

- Liquids
- Gels
- Granules
- Beads
- Powders
- Pellets
- Tablets
- Gummies/confectioneries
- Pastes
- Capsules
- Elixirs

- Crystals
- Slurries
- Pastes
- Viscosity changers such as the category of gums
- Compressed designs flat or in relief
- All above with or without effervescence
- All above with or without encapsulations
- Object of the invention is to present methods of operation.
- When in contact with wetting agent
- Automatic releases; quick release to slow release, at one time or in incremental times
- Need to be manipulated by shaking, stirring, etc.
- Liquid drawn into the packet and then released regardless of method.
- Liquid impregnates packet causing swelling and ultimate release.
- Manual release
- Packet has to be opened and ingredients manually put into the liquid regardless of form of contents inside the packet.
- Inside the machine the opening can occur and be dumped in.
- Packaging
- Synthetic or non synthetic materials
- Clear or opaque
- Texture/Braille
- Graphics, design, indicia, color, shape, dimension
- With or without one or more support members
- What used for
- By whom
- Under what conditions
- Example of forms with or with support member
- Parachute
- Inside of a bottle top change top
- Origami
- Folded and shape revealed when opened
- Geometric
- Characters
- Straw
- Peel Off Dot Strips

The system can be configured to discourage littering and, where possible, encourage recycling, by making
garbage and/or recycling receptacles which are able to offer reward for their use. Such receptacles can be employed in any venue where garbage is generated and/or recyclable materials are sold.

[0542] The system provides the ability to make a complete new product, enhance and/or enrich an existing product in the following: water, water-based liquid products; milk products; alcohol-present or -based (regardless of source); vegetarian, non-vegetarian, and/or both food categories, with or without value perceived, value added, and/or both. Those would include the following, and others, which fall under the above descriptions:

[0543] Water and water-based products, regardless of packaging

[0544] All beverages in containers regardless of packaging

[0545] Soups, broths, stocks, consommes,

[0546] Chips (any source) and dips, flavorings, and toppings

[0547] Pasta, toppings and sauces

[0548] Ice cream, yogurt, gelatos, ice like products, water ices, snow cones, and the like; topping selections, sauces,

[0549] Frostees, Ice products, Smoothies

[0550] Build a meal, meal replacement, and/or both whereby you already have a finished product but want to add additional value.

[0551] Spreadables, fillables and/or the like to be used with crackers, bread, as in a sandwich, pockets, crepes,

[0552] Hot or cold cereals and toppings, fruits, nuts, liquids, seasonings

[0553] Meat, fish, poultry: flavorings, toppings, sauces, seasonings and/or the like

[0554] Rice and toppings: flavorings, toppings, sauces, seasonings and/or the like

[0555] French fries: flavorings, toppings, sauces, seasonings and/or the like

[0556] Baked potatoes: flavorings, toppings, sauces, seasonings and/or the like.

[0557] The vending system can dispense food or beverage products at any temperature, including frozen, chilled, heated or cooked by any process known in the art.

[0558] The system may use a cross-promotional method of payment. Example: A hang tag on clothing having Disney indicia may activate a discount on a purchase of a Coke.

[0559] The system allocates payment automatically at time of purchase to each supplier company directly, but also in the appropriate percentage to the owner/operator of the system. This prevents the delay of payment of override revenues, commissions, markups, etc. to the vending system owner/operator.

[0560] 36. The system also provides a method of restricting purchases to a particular category of goods. For example, parents can configure a credit or debit card for children’s use that will only allow them to buy parent-approved products; a card can be restricted to products appropriate for diabetics or persons on other restricted diets.

[0561] The system will accept other purchases, but they would have to be made via a non-restricted method. With the special card, as with any owned debit credit, smart, magnetic card and/or the like it is possible for a company to track important data, not just related to the product but to the consumer, user of the card, as well.

[0562] A company card can be used for these machines may ensure brand loyalty to one or more entities, which may operate independently or as a consortium.

[0563] A record of the transaction may be stored any where and/or by any means for future use. As an example with kids, parents can find out what their kid ate, drank, used, etc. if tracking information was made available to them by the company regardless of the method of retrieval, for free or at an additional cost.

[0564] The inventive vending machine system can be coupled with an entertainment, educational, informational, active, reactive, or interactive component in the same machine(s), or more than one companion machine(s) attached or not, which can operate independently and/or synergistically. If the machine is in a venue, which offers one or more other opportunities for a consumer to participate in, be it entertainment, education, or location for purchasing additional items, it is conceived that the consumer will partake in an “add on” opportunity.

[0565] While the product is being formulated/formatted there is time for which the buyer may partake in an activity within the same and/or companion machine. This is very psychologically reinforcing, as pleasure is associate with product. Also accomplished by a small prize with each product that is vended this relates to the Cracker Jack Box Presentation.

[0566] The inventive system provides a vehicle for test-marketing of beverages. This allows more beverages to be tested without producing them in ready-to-drink format. A custom-created beverage formula can then be transmitted to a manufacturer for possible future marketing by the manufacturer.

[0567] The system can also offer products for animals in the same vending operation as for humans and/or have a vending operation solely for animals, pets, etc. Animals, mainly pets, that may accompany their owner on a regular basis are usually on a leash and are afforded the opportunity of being present at various venues especially vending machines.

[0568] A support member(s) may be offered, because they are also considered as functional/useful. A support member may be nothing more than a mixing and/or drinking vessel of normally recognized design and/or of a special design with one or more features. The support member is the drinking bowl. Or water is kept in bowls, not bottles, for pets only. Could have a screw on lid like a wider mouth bottle. For example, there exists on the market collapsible cups, which may and/or may not be “throw-aways” ergo one time use (hopefully biodegradable).

[0569] Considering the variety of cats, dogs, etc., one can program into the operation the category of the species, the
age, the weight for special consideration and claims. Thus, puppies, (babies) have different needs. An animal with a special health condition can be programmed in; e.g., a diabetic dog weighing 50 pounds.

[0570] The inventor also makes note that there exists an opportunity for testing a potential animal product and/or testing certain additives which may, or may not, find a home and/or be packaged with animal/pet food regardless of type of product, amount of servings provided, container size, shape, and/or the like.

[0571] The inventive system can provide a branded-ability vending system with tailored individual options. For organizations such as Weight Watchers International® who have venues and whose products are in major chain stores, there can be a branded ability machine with tailored individual options (a meal with or without salt).

[0572] Portion controlled and cost appropriate options. An example: An individual can program in one’s category, his/her gender, age, present weight, height/size needs, desires/goals and the machine(s) will offer suggestions, variations, product specifics, etc., or can even offer other information pertinent to the request, for free or at a fee, based on how much information requested so delivered etc. (examples would be, but not limited to, calories, sodium content, fiber grams and/or the like).

[0573] The system can be configured to provide handicap access to the vending system whereby integrated into the general controls or on a special side of the machine there is a method for all the necessary operative controls for the vending system to be within reach of a person in a wheelchair and/or to provide any means so that a disabled person can activate and retrieve even from a port on a different side (location).

[0574] The system can provide increased consumer education and identification of who, how when, the consumer should use the product if it is deemed to be a responsible decision to do so. Examples would be:

[0575] Product use for humans only, animals only, or both
[0576] Consumed directly or indirectly whereby the resulting product goes into another product
[0577] Product labeled by age groups such as children, teens, seniors
[0578] Labeled by their enhancing properties such as energy drink, gut health, cholesterol lowering, essentially what they do for you
[0579] Labeled by vending machine with products options labeled for health conditions and challenges diabetics, sodium restrictions
[0580] Braille to provide promotions, advertisements, instruct, to educate, to entertain.

[0581] The system can eliminate and/or reduce the need for acidulants when formulating a beverage, as the vending machine dispenses components for a finished product to be mixed on the spot. The Food and Drug Administration of the United States requires that for the production of a beverage containing ingredients with the potential of producing pathogens, if said beverage is not to be consumed immediately and is not stored under refrigerated conditions, it must be acidic and hot-filled. Therefore, all beverages existing in traditional vending machines are acidic and, for the most part, contain preservatives. The continuous consumption of acidic beverages may lead to gastrointestinal problems, including erosion of the esophagus and acid-reflex disease, which in turn can lead to esophageal cancer. Thus, if a beverage is mixed at the time of purchase, it need not be as acidic, and can therefore avoid causing gastrointestinal distress.

[0582] The system as related to a specific product can keep all active ingredients for use in food or beverage formulas stable and bio-available to the product being made using technologies such as encapsulations etc. The system can provide separate airtight and perhaps sterile environments within the machine for complete digestible products with reduced and/or eliminated preservatives, acids, chemicals, etc.

[0583] The system can utilize multiple machines comprising the vending system may work in an assembly-line manner whereby the user takes the product from one machine to another and/or if connected the machine may be able to pass the item down the line.

[0584] If a vending system is out of an item and/or cannot product an item, it lets the user know where the closest system is that is operational, and to the specifications of the user.

[0585] The flexibility of the system allows it to provide a method for funding a charity(s) whereby a certain percentage of the profits from a machine may go to a charity and this could be with, or without, celebrity endorsement and/or endorsement, or the incorporation of any and/or all of the aspects of this invention.

[0586] The system is able test price points appropriate for an item by adjusting price according to location, ethnicity, financial income, different packaging images, etc.

[0587] Products Now Can be Tested 24 Hours a Day Without Needed Labor.

[0588] If any attempt is made to steal any portion of the product, or currencies, the vending system will respond in one or more ways, such as the ability to take a picture or record a fingerprint or method of identification, sound an alarm, flash lights, spray a dye which will coat an individual if tampering.

[0589] The system enables one to design jewelry and accessories for humans, toys (dolls), pets etc. The customer/designer can virtually design a product on screen, see a proof, receive a print out and then have access to receiving the product immediately or at a future date. One or more of the same products can be ordered.

[0590] The system may also dispense components of the finished product, resembling a mini craft store but providing just the number needed for the product.

[0591] The inventor here is most sensitive to peoples needs and desires who do not live in areas where they have access to all the choices one would have if they lived in a large urban environment and have access to craft, and/or the like, stores. Small towns etc. don’t have the abilities to provide many choices and so, as an example, a young
creative child is not exposed to the options that their urban big city sisters are exposed to. While Internet stores and infomercials, and catalogues present opportunities for ordering product it is not possible to make such a custom product immediately and/or without buying more and/or different components than is necessary and/or that one will never use.

[0592] Another example is the creation of personalized labels for product(s) within the system. Some vineyards offer a personalized label option where by you can order wine with a personalized name on it, or a denomination such as “This wine was made for Jane and Johns 25th Anniversary.” Jones Soda offers the public the opportunity of sending in artwork to be selected by the company to go on their production bottles.

[0605] In inventive system one can design ones own custom label. All possible ranges of customization, from embroidery to digital reproduction with color ranges, materials, sizes. Quantities range from a single label upward and follow all the duplicating abilities previously stated herein. If there is product(s) in the machine that label can be affixed to the product before delivered, or dispensed at the same time for the buyer to label.

[0607] If the product is not in the machine and the label is to be affixed to product, then all ordering regardless of quantity with follow the parameters previously stated. If the label is to be put on manually regardless of the number, then they will need to have sticking options such as an adhesive backing, peel off an adhesive back impregnated with or without aroma.

[0608] Further, this custom label can also come with additional coupons and offerings for the consumer. If the label is made digitally then the consumer may receive a copy on a disk from the machine or forward to a designated computer for saving for one’s records and/or later use. If made digitally, and if a famous personality ( licensable character) is incorporated into the design, then royalties must be paid and the equipment must be able govern that or not release the data from the system which has the royalty feature built into it.

[0609] h. The system may serve as “print shop” of sorts, as an individual may bring in his own disk (or present to the system a personal electronic device containing the material) for which the system has a user-friendly connection mode. The data is transferred and the system then offers the buyer the option of accepting as presented or use other capabilities of manipulation (formatting, color, font changes etc.) and embellishment. The newly designed digital rendition can then be saved and/or override what the buyer originally had fabricated. Digital reproduction allows the system to be programmed to permit variations (e.g., in colors) from one unit to another within a single production run.

[0610] The material that the label is printed on may have additional benefits such as a backing that if affixed to a cold or hot product will preserve the temperature of said product.

[0611] The vending systems may also offer perks such as coupons, free movie tickets, travel discounts, game play opportunities for the arcade like machines, etc. as enticements to use the system and/or for rewards.

[0612] The system interfaces with a portable digital device, allowing the customer to begin the design process off-site and then transmit information to the vending system for completion of the process. The vending system is accessible by a customer via an off-site computer, with appropriate customer identification. Information about the customers product selections can be sent ahead to the system, and stored there until the customer retrieves it.
[0613] Information from the system can be transmitted to the customer, including scheduling of user time, allowing the customer to avoid waiting in line if the system is busy when he arrives there. This allows a customer who does not have a portable device or portable storage capability to begin the design process off-site and transmit the information to the vending system.

[0614] The system facilitates collaboration with other customers, one or more vending systems can be accessed simultaneously, either via an off-site computer, or on-site.

[0615] The vending system is equipped with scanning capabilities. The system also provides the ability to record sounds and/or receive sounds which have been pre-recorded via digital, analog or other means.

[0616] 59. The system monitors the amount of time a customer spends in the design process and provide a means for charging a customer incrementally for time spent beyond an allotted basic period, so that the system is not kept busy by customers who are not making purchases. Customers may be charged an entry fee for a minimum amount of time before they can begin using the system, further time being charged incrementally.

[0617] The system may offer to credit the cost of time purchased against the cost of a purchased item. The amount of time credited can be related to the final purchase price. Time charges may be varied for any reason, for example, according to the time of day, weather condition, promotional specials, etc. Time monitoring is a way of tracking behavioral patterns, by providing feedback as to how popular an item is, how long a consumer spends to design it, how valuable it is to the consumer in time, money, both. (Great for tourist attraction.)

[0618] The vending system can be used as a broad, non-biased focus group, since it monitors all details of customer interaction as well as personalized information entered by the customer. A perk or reward can be offered to the customer to encourage him/her to submit personal information.

[0619] The system protects the intellectual property rights of an inventor, designer, creator. The vending system may record the date and time of creation of a product and/or concept. The vending system may, for an additional price, mail a description of the product and/or concept created to the inventor/designer/creator, who may keep the mail unopened as documentation his/her ownership of the product and/or concept and of the date and time of its creation. If a tamper-proof, unalterable digital means of transmitting such information becomes available in the future, the vending system may employ those means instead of mail.

[0620] The vending system may allow an inventor/designer/creator to document his/her ownership of his/her creation and the date and time of its creation by generating a disclosure document based on the product and/or concept to be protected and submitting the same to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office or the corresponding governing agency in any other country.

[0621] The vending system can create and maintain a database, for free or for charge, of any information regarding an inventor and his/her invention which he/she wishes to be made public, so that persons or entities searching the database may be able to contact the inventor regarding business opportunities, and so that inventors working on similar technologies are able to contact each other. The database system can include language translation capability so that users from a variety of countries can use it. Searching persons or entities may also post information about inventions that they would be interested in, so that inventors may contact such searching persons or entities. The database would also include a list of legal and business professionals, including patent attorneys, who can assist inventors with the next steps in developing their invention. The system can also offer a database of referrals to outside vendors that can facilitate the creation of the product.

[0622] As a rule, companies do not want to take submissions from the public, and they follow the Not Invented Here (NIH) principle to protect themselves from lawsuits. However, with this system, there is now provided a means of protection for the inventor, thus making it more difficult for a company to dispute the ownership of an invention/design/concept.

[0623] The inventor can request, for a charge, a verification document which is not to be opened to be mailed to himself and/or his legal counsel. A company such as “firstuse.com” does create these sort of files for a price.

[0624] A company can sponsor a vending system for which they will have the right of first refusal for anything created using that vending system.

[0625] The vending system may operate in modules or stations whereby the customer can move from station to station, either sequentially or randomly, as each station completes a portion of the product being created. The machines have the options of robotic movable and/or expanding parts so that they are not confined to a fixed structure.

[0626] An example is an arm or a shelf that extends beyond the confines of the machine to deliver the product, advertisement, promotion and/or the like.

[0627] Can be used to deliver product to those who need assistance. Children are delighted especially.

[0628] As a product exits audio may accompany and be activated by any means.

[0629] The vending system combines and/or incorporate into the vending system one or more elements of game machines, to attract customers to use the vending system and to enhance the overall experience of the vending system. The sort of game machines that could be used may include, for example (without limitation):

[0630] arcade and/or video games

[0631] pinball machines

[0632] Pachinko machines

[0633] jukeboxes

[0634] The games may be sponsored and include:

[0635] product branding

[0636] branding associated with television game shows, quiz shows, talent shows, etc.
[0637] The image, voice pattern or both of a celebrity, character, or the like that is used as the game moderator, host, facilitator etc.

[0638] Sponsored games may be free since they are supported by advertising, while unsponsored games may require payment.

[0639] The vending system can present a scientific display of how a product is made; or the vending system can present as a Rube Goldberg experience whereby the machine goes through wacky, for lack of a better description, machinations until the completed product is vended.

[0640] The system provides space for banners and messages in any form whereby the system incorporates the qualities of a billboard (stationary, moving, etc. best expressed by those skilled in the art), such as, for example:

[0641] Advertising

[0642] Messages from law enforcement agencies, e.g. the message “Not to do Drugs.”

[0643] Pictures of lost children, animals etc., which may or may not require the entity posting the picture to pay for the use of the space.

[0644] The system also provides a means for identifying and locating children by providing children with a smart card with their identification on it so that if they wander from home they can be identified by the card as the machine has a locating system and if that child is registered with the company we can help find lost children 6,339,744 like a Global Positioning System. Especially if the child has a card in a large venue like a Disneyland or a mall. If a child presents his card the machine may alert a central office whereby they can talk to the child through a loud speaker so that a security officer of the like may be summoned.

[0645] The system conserves energy and use alternate energy sources when possible. Vending machines that are outdoors can be in part or in whole solar powered. There is also the possibility of harvesting solar energy, or energy from any source, to be relayed to power, in total or in part, the machine.

[0646] Many technologies that use mirrors and foils and metals and fiber optics and the like can be used to give the look of additional brightness, dimension, illumination, and/or the like by which it would seem that more energy in used than actually is. Heat conducting and transferring technologies such as conduction, convection, and radiation barrier (NASA) technologies can be used to regulate temperature and provide better insulation thus conserve energy. Radiant barrier containers and packaging materials can be used to insulate the products within the machine and/or the containers that the products are dispensed in. Radiant barrier containers will allow a consumer to keep a finished product at an ideal temperature for an extended period of time.

[0647] The system provides containers that will keep products at an ideal temperature for an extended length of time. For example, Radiant Barrier technology developed by NASA will allow, if used accordingly containers to be so fabricated so that heat seeks cool when a product is put in at a temperature that product will remain at that temperature for a protracted period of time. An example is that a container of frozen ice cream made it in tact frozen from Los Angeles to New York still in its frozen state. Vending machine products, especially temperature sensitive (hot coffee, cold drinks) are usually consumed when then are received or they lose their ideal drinking temperature.

[0648] It is very convenient to receive a product from a vending machine which you can purchase at one time of the day and it will stay at the ideal time until consumption perhaps many hours later. Make you ice cream Sunday in the morning and have it for the afternoon with or without additional refrigeration. Ideally one can have his gas filled at a station and vend from that station a breakfast, beverage, snack, lunch etc. And all will be at the right temperature when ready to consume.

[0649] As a tie in a credit card can be provided that can work in any of the companies’ products or assigned products at full price or a discounted price. Embedded in this card can be information that the company wishes the consumer to retrieve and/or information the consumer wishes to have the company know.

[0650] It is advantageous for the vending machine system be compatible with a theme regardless of shape or size. The theme may or may not be carried out through the looks of the machine, the operation, the products dispensed and/or the like. An example is a machine may be designed to look like a waterfall and carry only water and products to go into water. Another example is that it is a kids-only machine it would present in that fashion. The entire machine could be a tribute to a super-hero or a company like Disney.

[0651] The inventive system can protect the privacy of the user by providing a place for private viewing of personal material even when in the midst of public displays of graphics, writing etc.

[0652] Example: A customer may enter payment information in private

[0653] Example: A customer may not want anyone to know that he is looking at literature pertaining to certain health conditions.

[0654] Example: A customer may wish to design a product in private.

[0655] The system can provide a place for private listening to audio material if desired. One or more headphones and/or the like maybe present as cane a built-in telephone system. Then the entire system may be voice activated. A customer can put in a card with information identifying him/her, including voice pattern, and the machine will recognize that customer and interaction can take place.

[0656] The invention can provide consumers with the ability to vote for products, characters, etc. through vending system. The buyer may get to vote without making a purchase or with a purchase only.

[0657] The inventive system can be configured in the form of a shopping center of any size: a strip center, a group of separate establishments working in consort, even to a huge shopping mall or the like.

[0658] Benefits to Customers:

[0659] The vending system operates on a group discount and or interrelated combinations of allowing
the customer to benefit in any manner by staying within the confines of the venue.

[0660] The venue may be inside on one or more levels, outside, connected units, regardless of formation and/or the like.

[0661] Consumers may receive a discount card by shopping incrementally at each venue.

[0662] Special invitations and perks and bonuses instead of being offered by one store is offered buy the center in general.

[0663] Consumers may buy a credit card for shopping at the entire operation and then receive a general discount at the discretion of the operator.

[0664] Benefits to Shopkeepers:

[0665] This make the space in a center such as this more valuable to those who wish to rent, lease space as they are part of a whole interface.

[0666] This invention combines venues of the same category or any number more than one of categories.

[0667] It can resemble a department store with different departments.

[0668] Tenants do not have to participate but it will be to their advantage.

[0669] Large stores like Wal Mart are making it difficult for the individualists (the small establishments) By this invention the are connected to larger unit with advantages.

[0670] Some advantages are that their may be one printer who will do special work at special rates, insurance benefits (especially if the tenants form an association or a compatible feature for employees etc. offering a broad range of opportunities.

[0671] Vending machine in this operation can draw you into a tenant unit by what they offer.

[0672] The vending system can even be operated in a drive-through manner.

[0673] The system also permits cross promotional opportunities such as with Disney and Mac Donalds. A vending system may be situated in proximity to people waiting in line for any reason, providing entertainment, food products, and any other purchase opportunity for which the vending system can be used. The vending system can be situated on the outside of a store building, either attached to the building or not. The vending system can be operated even when the store is closed.

[0674] Food stores or restaurants can make “leftovers” available via the vending system. Individual units of an item normally sold in quantity inside the store can be offered in the outside vending system.

[0675] Pricing can be varied for “off-hours,” if desired.

[0676] The vending system will accept payment via food stamps, or whatever food-restricted social relief may be offered by the appropriate governmental agency in the future. The vending system will be able to restrict purchases so made to those items authorized by the pertinent government regulations.

[0677] Any vending system pertaining to a particular field or product category may have the ability to make available a database of intellectual properties relevant to that category. The general public may use such a database to contact an inventor or patent owner for information concerning the invention. Potential licensees may contact patent owners. Inventors or patent owners may use the database to help them locate entities that may be interested in developing products from their intellectual properties.

[0678] Another embodiment of the invention is a business model centered around a vending operation following a “real estate” metaphor. The vending system may follow a condominium pattern, where an owner of the system sells units to vendors. An owner of a space can resell his unit sub-lease etc. with or without the permission of the owner depending on the terms and conditions of a mutually acceptable contractual agreement.

[0679] Just as with homeowners’ dues, a model can be created whereby everyone contributes to the maintenance, upgrading etc. Particulars worked out by the contractual agreement.

[0680] The vending system may follow a rental pattern, where an owner of the system rents and/or leases one or more units of space to vendors depending on the terms and conditions of a mutually acceptable contractual agreement:

[0681] Mutual agreements can have a sublet clause.

[0682] Terms and conditions, length, cancellation and/or the like arranged mutually.

[0683] Further conceived is that some space may be rented/leased, while some space sold. This provides leverage.

[0684] The physical position of a unit and its relative visibility are conceived to be part of the rent/lease/sale transaction, so that they cannot be changed outside of the control of the vendor contracting the unit.

[0685] Each unit can have its own payment/compensation ability and/or use the service of the owner, with or without a management company.

[0686] Each system can be filled/managed and/or the like on an individual basis and/or it is conceived that there be a management company to manage the property as an entity and/or any unit holder can have his own full and/or partial servicing.

[0687] Tenants may have the benefits analogous to “Share Tenant Services” (STS) enjoyed by real estate tenants, whereby one or more industries bundles a variety of services (such as, for example, utilities, phone, but also duplicating services and others unique to a vending operation situation) and offers them to tenants at reduced cost, greater convenience, or the like.

[0688] An association can be formed comprising the tenants of a single vending system, a regional network of systems, or any such grouping.

[0689] Group rates may be negotiated for things like maintenance and insurance costs.

[0690] Health benefits may be made available to association members.
Discounts and cross relationships can be available to association members.

The owner/manager of the vending system can have the option of listing available units in what might be called “Vending Opportunity for rent or lease,” just as in the real estate listings of the multiples and/or the newspapers, Internet, and/or the like, either directly or through an agent.

Sale or rental transactions may be handled by brokers or leasing agents. It is possible to have an entire network of vending brokers, just like real estate brokers, who can service in the same manner or differently.

A license may be necessary and there becomes laws that have to be enforced etc. Codes may be written.

As a business model, that the entire operation compile data and distribute on an as-best-used basis.

Each unit holder receive its own data, which may be a compilation of data pertaining to multiple units in multiple locations. This business model provides opportunity to test new products before investing a lot of money to go to market. The flexibility is huge, as one can obtain units in many markets and move around from market to market.

In this model, a vendor is not subject to the sort of requirements typically imposed by, for example, supermarkets, which may impose cooperative advertising fees, and wherein the vendor has no control over its products’ positioning within the store. This allows a company to launch, test market and the like a product in one or more foreign countries in one or more machines/systems at a reasonable rate of market entry. The company can have the flexibility of changing even minute details, such as a label color, aroma and the like.

The system offers an independent and/or a large company to own and/or operate the machine(s)/machine system. This provides many opportunities including but not limited to the obvious, especially those who know advertising, marketing, etc. The business model provides unified services such as co-op advertising and promotional opportunities.

Real estate being very expensive, the vending is an opportunity to be provided to the smallest of possibility (one owner, one machine) to the very ultimate and as big as the huge shopping center conglomerates.

It is conceivable to pay for all purchases made within, as one and/or more payments. The machine/system can have its own credit card, individual payment system and/or act in total. It can be of benefit to an entity who wants to bring a new product to market to own an entire vending system, because that owning entity can reserve more units for its own use than it needs at first, leasing or renting the reserved units not being used, and then reclaiming them for use leases expire, tenants leave, etc., and as its own operation is ready to expand.

The vendor occupying a unit can do one or more of the following and or the like:

- Change pricing
- Change products
- Pay taxes etc., as even a little slot in one machine is a business.

The huge slotting fees in stores can be eliminated and a product still gets exposure.

The tenant/rentor/lease/purchaser of space is in control of the decisions and therefore eliminates the potential of failure due to a store’s mismanagement.

It is a very important opportunity/venture for a large company to go into because they can test products from many different vendors to see what they might want to consider to be under their umbrella (ownership, distribution, etc.) regardless of the relationship. It is clear here that the larger the network the more possibilities and power the owner/operator has.

Products may be tangible and/or virtual.

A large setup contain a photo opportunity, a music (audio) opportunity, food/beverage/etc.

The government is able to set up such an enterprise on publicly owned property, for the purpose of bringing in additional revenue, displaying information, posting opportunities in the local community etc. As part of a sale or rental/lease agreement, the government may make a small business loan available, provide opportunities for minorities, etc. Operations may be indoors, outdoors, both. On-premise storage may be offered. Parking may be available.

The vending operation may have drive-by and or drive-through offerings as with all parts of this invention. The vending operation may be located on a moving transportation operation, such as a cruise ship. The vending operation may be placed in large parking structures, especially subterranean, on flat roof accessible space and/or the like. In these types of venues you have space that is not generally being used, and considerable traffic passes, especially in a garage.

The inventive system can provide gainful employment, with growth potential, to persons whose opportunities elsewhere are limited, by creating opportunities for owning, operating, working in or distributing to vending operate as herein described.

People for whom such a work environment might be appropriate include:

- Those with disabilities or health challenges;
- Could manage a vending system without being required to perform heavy labor;
- Could assemble products for vending machines, perhaps off-site.
- People who have been on public assistance;
- People with language challenges: either those who do not speak the language of the country wherein they reside, or those with language-related cognitive impairment;
- Rehabilitated drug addicts;
- Those who have been incarcerated;
- Those recently discharged from military service;
- Young adults;
Owning, operating or working in a vending operation would be ideal for such people because:

- Work hours can be flexible;
- Skilled labor is not required;
- Such work would not require high visibility or a prestigious appearance, requirements of many other jobs which tend to disqualify such people;
- There is a low temptation to steal;
- Opportunities would be afforded to them to learn management skills and taking on increasing responsibility in a relatively small business environment;
- Working for a large, multi-location vending operation would give workers an opportunity to work in a variety of locations;
- Such employment would provide a way to build self-esteem and stimulate a feeling of productivity.

Compensation to those working in or for such a vending operation could be via salary/hourly wage, a percentage of profits, bonus, or a combination thereof.

Such a vending operation could be owned, operated and/or maintained by a partnership of people from a variety of circumstances, including those of limited or compromised circumstances as listed above.

Such a vending operation would provide a market for products produced in job shops for prisoners or former prisoners.

Employing such people in a vending operation provides a novel way for a large company to participate in community outreach or other social responsibility goals.

A government-owned vending system could be used to transition people back into the workforce who were previously unemployed and being managed by the penal system and/or social service agencies.

Welfare recipients can be employed in almost any capacity in such a vending operation.

Prison workers can be employed assembling products for sale in a government-owned vending system.

A vending system could be situated within a government property and a portion of the profit therefrom paid to the government, and then, for example, be used to fund government programs. An example of an opportunity for someone with limited skills, physical disabilities or any other impediment to holding a steady, full-time job would be a beverage-vending machine:

- which may be a complete vending operation or part of a larger operation or a concession within a large venue;
- which features:
  - physical accessibility of the machine itself (i.e., proximity to parking, on the ground floor) and of the controls and interior of the machine;
  - use of municipal water, so that no heavy bottles need be loaded, or use of bottled water which the bottled water supplier has agreed to stock in the machines as part of its supply agreement; and
  - use of additives in small packets, so no large containers of loose material need be loaded;
- sponsored by a consortium of suppliers of the additives and/or bottled water as part of their community outreach programs
- who gain advertising and public relations benefits and community good will thereby;
- who pay a salary to the operator; and
- who display signage pertaining to their products on or around the machine;
- which may also have sponsors not related to the products vended but provide a theme, such as a cartoon character.

Another embodiment is a machine for vending alcoholic beverages, which includes age-authenticating controls and is capable of identifying customers with dietary restrictions concerning alcohol and prohibiting sale of inappropriate products to such customers. The system can provide alcoholic beverages which have been enhanced with added substances which:

- do not naturally occur in the alcoholic beverage;
- provide scientifically proven health benefits; and
- may also alter perception, such as improving flavor and mouth feel.

The system can provide alcoholic beverages which have been enhanced with added soluble fiber, both to improve the mouth feel and/or change the viscosity of the beverage while simultaneously providing the health benefits of fiber. While alcoholic beverages have the potential of being abused, they can also be beneficial. Polyphenols in red wine has been shown to be beneficial to heart health. Beverages can be used to reduce tension, especially in elderly for whom tension-relieving medications might be contraindicated but alcohol may not be.

Focus groups have reported that alcoholic beverages enhanced with soluble fiber have what is called improved “mouth feel”—that is, they are experienced as smoother, less acidic and less alcoholic-tasting, and have less of the burning sensation often associated inexpensive alcoholic beverage products. Improved mouth feel, or viscosity changes such as thickening, can make alcoholic
beverages easier to swallow for those who might benefit from them but might otherwise avoid them, such as:

- [0757] people with swallowing disorders (dysphasia)
- [0758] post-surgical patients, especially oral or facial surgeries
- [0759] Inexpensive wines or other alcoholic products can be improved, expanding revenue opportunities for sellers and producers.
- [0760] Soluble fiber has been shown to:
  - [0761] Address obesity and curb appetite;
  - [0762] Lower serum cholesterol;
  - [0763] Improve stamina and endurance;
  - [0764] Stabilize blood sugar, and
  - [0765] Remove toxins from the body.
- [0766] Soluble has been used in bakery and other food products, both for texture enhancement and health benefits, but not in alcoholic beverages.

Fibers to be used, which are often referred to as “soluble fiber,” are between 0.1% and 10% by weight water-soluble indigestible fiber selected from the group consisting of dextrins, maltodextrins, galactomannans, cellulose ethers, inulin, alginates, agar, carrageenan, psyllium, guar gum, gum tragacanth, gum karya, gum ghatti, gum acacia, gum arabic, partially hydrolyzed products thereof and mixtures thereof.

Under the customization guidelines of this invention presented, to include that the system have the ability to product custom personal care products to be used topically, such as cosmetics in custom colors, uniquely formulated lotions, soaps, hair care products, perfumes and/or the like.

The system can provide a multi-vendor venue, such as a shopping center, theme park, swap meet or the like, which features:

- [0770] An option of using a “smart card”;
- [0771] Which may act in lieu of a credit card or debit card;
- [0772] Which may be used to record shopper identification information;
- [0773] Which may be used to restrict purchases to certain amounts of money or certain product categories, such as parents restricting children to certain purchases or from seeing movies with an inappropriate rating, or for use as a gift certificate.

The system also provides a central check-out system which may optionally be used by any vendor in the venue;

- [0774] A central information center which:
  - [0775] Includes a vendor directory for any or all vendors in the venue, which directory may include:
  - [0776] Details as to the location of the vendor;
  - [0777] Product information at whatever level of detail the vendor chooses, which can certainly be
  - [0778] more detailed than what is found on the sort of static, standing directory typically used in shopping centers;
  - [0779] Advertising relating to products offered, sales, specials, special events, or whatever else the vendor wishes to advertise.

- [0780] May inform shoppers of promotions, sales, special events and the like taking place anywhere in the venue or in any vendor location.
- [0781] May inform shoppers of emergencies, such as a fire, the location of the emergency, and the location of the exit nearest each shopper.
- [0782] Allows a shopper to design an itinerary and prioritize his/her time within the venue.
- [0783] Allows a shopper to order from a vendor without actually visiting the vendor’s location, such as reserving movie tickets while one is eating lunch, or ordering a forgotten item just before checkout and having it mailed to one’s home.
- [0784] Can collect marketing and demographic data concerning a shopper’s activities and add this data to a database.
- [0785] Can accept information from shoppers that they may wish to be kept on record, such as medical information, emergency contact information, family birthdays, or any other data.
- [0786] May interface with a shopper’s portable device, such as a Palm Pilot®, or a shopper’s home device, such as a personal computer.
- [0787] Can consult a database of marketing and demographic data to see if data already exists concerning the shopper currently using the device, and if so, offer a greeting, a record of past purchases, gift reminders, recommendations for appropriate new purchases and other customer-specific messages.
- [0788] Can be made available over the Internet so that shoppers can access some or all of these features from a home computer or other Internet-capable device.
- [0789] A hand-held device which is issued to shoppers upon presenting a credit or debit card, or a “smart card,” which device:
  - [0790] Connects to the central information system, providing an input/output means to give shoppers access to the information and capabilities offered to them by the central information system.
- [0791] Must be returned when the shopper leaves the venue to avoid incurring a replacement charge.
- [0792] May be issued in multiples for people shopping together, such as family members.
- [0793] Can incur a usage charge if no purchase is made in the venue.
- [0794] Contains a scanner for recording purchases.
- [0795] Accumulates a purchase subtotal both within stores and from store to store.
May include an attachment such as a pin or wristband for putting on a child, elderly person or pet, who can then be located using a local positioning system.

May be used as a verbal communication device, like a telephone or walkie-talkie, within the confines of the venue.

Shoppers may communicate verbally with each other.

Shoppers may communicate with personnel working in the venue, such as maintenance or security personnel, or personnel in individual vendor locations.

Example: For making restaurant reservations, inquire about product availability.

Example: Notifying maintenance personnel of safety hazards, rest rooms needing maintenance, etc.

Overcomes the problem that many cell phones do not work in certain types of structures for a myriad of reasons.

Can record still or video images with sound and transmit them to devices carried by other shoppers in the same shopping group, or to personnel working in the venue.

Headphones or other private listening means can be used.

Can display reminders to a shopper, such as when a movie is about to start, their table is ready for lunch, etc.

Good for center

Enables the center to collect demographic data;

Builds shopper loyalty;

Offers unique position in the market:

Security features

Convenience

Benefits for vendor tenants:

Can advertise to every consumer that comes in;

Can update advertising on a daily basis;

May be able to reduce staff;

Easier to maintain;

Speed of purchasing;

Less handling of cash transactions (especially advantageous for vendors who do not accept credit cards, or for swap meets where vendors do not have large amounts of cash on hand).

The system can provide for creation of a network of multi-vendor venues having the features described above which can communicate with each other. Data can be shared among venues, including shoppers' personal data, demographic data and inventory control. Analysis of sales data can assist in making inventory decisions and leasing decisions.

92. A vending system incorporating the general features of vending systems described herein, specifically directed towards the gardening industry. It can include the duplication features, customization features, round-the-clock access, flexibility of configuration, etc. of the overall vending system.

b. One or more gardening products may be available in the same vending operation, such as seeds, plant food, insecticides, small tools, gloves, etc. Plants and plant care products may vended in small amounts, as for use with a few potted plants, and in sample sizes.

Allows consumer to test products before committing to large purchases.

Allows manufacturers to test-market a new product or formulation.

Uses of customization features:

Customizing plant care products whereby one can order very broad or specific care products. Products for roses in general or specific varieties such as: baby roses, vs. bush roses vs. climbing roses.

With so many variable organisms which might need different insecticides to control small amounts may be ordered according to the needs of a particular classification of plants and or a variety within a classification.

With a movement towards more organic gardening and getting away from harsh chemicals it might be difficult to find a ready made product that will be effective. Therefore it might be necessary to use one or more treatments sequentially or in any combination for one or more specific plants.

With many plants developing insect tolerance and the continuing laws reducing toxic insecticides a consumer may now be able to purchase small amounts of approved chemicals to make custom blends. (especially with a focus on organic gardening)

Can aid in landscaping and plant design:

Can accept specifications from a buyer and inform the buyer of what plants meet those specifications and are compatible with each other, in what combination and arrangement, that are suitable to the climate of the intended locale, and are available either at that vending location or another vending location.

The system may make gardening-related information available, from special to planting suggestions in relating to geographical locations and/or combining elements in the garden for compatibility and/or beauty.

Companies offering specials, discounts etc. also can have posted pages.

Growers or other interested individuals can post notices concerning plants for sale, plants wanted.
The system may offer access to such references as the databases of intellectual properties concerning plants maintained by such entities as Cornell University and California State University/Davis.

Trade publications may sponsor, nurseries, etc. and also cross promotions etc with companies that are not in this industry but close to it (gardening tools, gloves, shoes) and or huge tractors etc. can participate.

The system can provide translations from one language into another of audio signals, text and/or images which might have meaning for speakers of one language that would be better expressed with different images for speakers of a different language, by:

Using embedded text, and/or simultaneously broadcasting readable text in one or more languages at the same time which is not visible to the naked eye;

Providing an interface device, such as glasses, which allows a user to see the translation text in the language of their choice.

The system converges the technologies of recorded entertainment material, such as music, music videos, still photos or other material in any combination, with advertising, promotions and/or cross-promotions into a finished product containing both the entertainment recording and the advertising, promotional and/or cross-promotional material, which may accompany some benefit to the consumer:

The recording can be compiled with the advertising material and sold as a finished product.

The recording can be compiled by the buyer from a selection of entertainment choices.

The advertising can be for one or more products, from one or more advertiser.

The advertising can include a charitable message.

The benefit to the consumer could consist of such things as:

Reduced price for the recording;

No charge to the consumer, if another product is being purchased;

Opportunity for the consumer to insert his/her own image into a photo with a featured entertainer, the photo being used on the packaging or included with the recording;

Opportunity to dedicate part of purchase price to a charitable donation.

The following claims are thus to be understood to include what is specifically illustrated and described above, what is conceptually equivalent, what can be obviously substituted and also what essentially incorporates the essential idea of the invention. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that various adaptations and modifications of the just-described preferred embodiment can be configured without departing from the scope of the invention. The illustrated embodiment has been set forth only for the purposes of example and that should not be taken as limiting the invention. Therefore, it is to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced other than as specifically described herein.

I claim:

1. A personalized restricted purchase method comprising the steps of:

   providing a wearable or carriable data storage device for storing personal, medical and financial data;

   storing at least one of personal data representing identity of an owner individual and purchase restriction, medical data representing medical conditions and restrictions relating to an owner-individual and financial data relating to the owner-individual on said data storage device;

   providing an automatic vending unit in communication with a reading apparatus capable of reading said data stored on said storage device; and

   having the owner-individual to present said data storage device to the reading apparatus whereby purchase of an item from the vending unit can be made provided the stored financial data authorize the cost of the purchase and provided the stored personal and/or medical data authorize the item.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said data storage device is selected from the group consisting a magnetic data storage device, a microelectronic data storage device, and an optical data storage device.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein said data storage device further comprises automatic communication facilities for reporting location and identity of the owner-individual.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein medical data are stored and the medical data prescribe medication for the owner-individual and wherein the automatic vending unit dispenses medications appropriate to the individual.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein the medications are intended for emergency use.

6. The method according to claim 5, the vending unit automatically makes an emergency report to authorities providing identifying and medical data from the data storage device in response to dispensing medications intended for emergency use.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the medical data and/or the personal data contain a list restricting consumption of certain foods and beverages and wherein the automatic vending unit will not dispense foods and beverages on the list to the owner-individual.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the medical data and/or the personal data contain a list ranking foods and beverages in terms of healthiness for the owner-individual and wherein the automatic vending unit rewards the owner-individual for selecting foods or beverages with a high healthiness ranking.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein the owner-individual receives a free item as a reward.

10. The method according to claim 8, wherein the owner-individual receives a financial rebate as a reward.

11. The method according to claim 1, wherein said vending unit further comprises an individual verification device that detects a physical character of an individual presenting the data storage device to verify identity between the individual and the owner-individual.
12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the physical character is selected from the group consisting of fingerprints, palmprints, retinal scans, iris scans, and voiceprints.

13. An automated vending system for creating a customized graphic design comprising:

- means for displaying a plurality of graphic sub-components that can be assembled to create a graphic design;
- means for inputting images;
- means for displaying inputted images;
- means for selecting and manipulating graphic sub-components and inputted images to create a graphic design; and
- means for storing the graphic design.

14. The automated vending system of claim 13, wherein the graphic design is for a personalized version of official government documents and means are supplied to render said official documents to ensure said documents’ legal validity.

15. The automated vending system of claim 14, wherein said official documents are rendered onto special governmentally authorized paper.

16. The automated vending system of claim 14, wherein the official government documents are selected from the group consisting of currency and customized postage stamps.

17. The automated vending system of claim 13, wherein the means for inputting photographs is selected from the group comprising a scanning device, a port to attach a personal digital assistant, a port to attach a personal computer and a digital camera.

18. The automated vending system of claim 13, wherein the graphic sub-components include celebrity images trademarks, logos, copy written material, licensable media characters, with a means for royalty compensation for the use of the image to the artist.

19. The automated vending system of claim 13, wherein the graphic sub-components are automatically obtained from a network.

20. The automated vending system of claim 13 further comprising means to render the graphic design into or on to a product.

21. The automated vending system of claim 20, wherein the means to take possession of the product is within the confines of the vending system or remotely located from the vending system.

22. The automated vending system of claim 13, wherein the means to render is selected from a two-dimensional printing device and a three-dimensional printing device.

23. The automated vending system of claim 13, wherein the graphic design is selected from the group consisting of a card design, a playing card design, a trading card design, product label design, a fabric transfer, and a T-shirt design.

24. The automated vending system of claim 20 further comprising means to transmit the card design over the Internet electronically.

25. The automated vending system of claim 24, wherein the electronically transmitted product includes sound.

26. The automated vending system of claim 20, wherein the system presents preset graphic designs to serve as test marketing for said preset designs.

27. The automated vending system of claim 20, wherein the system collects customer demographic data.

28. An automated vending system for creating a customized foods or beverages comprising:

- means for displaying a plurality of food or beverage components that can be assembled to create a food or beverage;
- means for displaying suggested food or beverage combinations recipes;
- means for a consumer to select suggested combinations recipes and food and beverage components to create new food or beverage combinations recipes or to modify or keep suggested recipes thereby selecting chosen recipes; and
- means for dispensing components to create food and beverages according to chosen recipes.

29. The vending system according to claim 28 further comprising means for storing the chosen recipes.

30. The vending system according to claim 28 further comprising means for transmitting the chosen recipes to third parties with the consumer’s permission and in return for a reward.

31. The vending system according to claim 28, wherein the means for dispensing components are located in a plurality of separate units in data communication with each other.

32. The vending system according to claim 31, wherein the consumer receives a partial product from each of the separate units and sequentially assembles a final product.

33. The vending system according to claim 28, wherein beverages are made by combining water and additives inside the integrated system whereby the finished product is dispensed.

34. The vending system according to claim 33, wherein the water is municipal water which is purified first.

35. The vending system according to claim 28, wherein the system supplies containers into which the beverage is dispensed.

36. An automated vending system for creating a customized accessory comprising:

- means for displaying a plurality of ornament sub-components that can be assembled to create a personal ornament;
- means for displaying suggested ornament designs;
- means for a consumer to select suggested designs and ornament sub-components to create new ornament or to modify or keep suggested designs thereby selecting a chosen ornament design; and
- means for dispensing sub-components to a personal ornament from the chosen ornament design.

37. The vending system according to claim 36, wherein data derived from consumer selection of the suggested accessory designs is used to test market those designs.

38. The vending system according to claim 36 further comprising means for storing the chosen ornament design.

39. The vending system according to claim 36 further comprising means for transmitting the chosen ornament design to third parties with the consumer’s permission and in return for a reward.

40. The vending system according to claim 36 further comprising means for transmitting the chosen ornament
design to third parties with the consumer's permission on which to build a consumer product for a business.

41. The vending system according to claim 36, wherein the means for dispensing ornament sub-components are located in a plurality of separate units in data communication with each other.

42. The vending system according to claim 41, wherein the consumer receives a partial product from each of the separate units and sequentially assembles a final accessory.

43. The vending system according to claim 36, wherein the accessory is selected from the group consisting of home accessories, ornaments, jewelry, and hair ornaments.

44. An automated vending system for creating a customized media collection comprising:

- means for displaying and sampling a plurality of audio and video media components that can be assembled to create a customized media collection;
- means for a consumer to select and order audio and video media components to create a customized media collection; and
- means for delivering the customized media collection to the consumer.

45. The vending system according to claim 44, wherein the customized media collection is delivered through storage on a tangible medium which is dispensed by said system.

46. The vending system according to claim 44, wherein the customized media collection is delivered through transmission to the consumer from the vending system, a remote location over a network.

47. The vending system according to claim 44, wherein the customized media collection contains multiple language support allowing consumers speaking different languages to use and enjoy the customized media collection.

48. A business method using the vending system according to claim 44, comprising the step of lowering a price paid by a consumer when at least some of the displayed media components contain advertising promotional material or otherwise compensating the consumer when including media components containing advertising promotional material in the customized collection.

49. The vending system according to claim 44, wherein demographic data relating the consumer and selection and order of media components are collected.

50. The vending system according to claim 49, wherein the demographic data are used to test market new artists.

51. A business method of reducing the cost of recorded media comprising the steps of by having a pre-recorded advertisement, message, jingle, song, play one or more times over the course of the recorded media play, and allowing the consumer to select the contents of the recorded media other than the advertisement, message, jingle or song.

52. The business method according to claim 51 further comprising the step of a company with a product or service providing the free downloading of music whereby their advertisement is attached to each track or specific intervals.

53. The business method according to claim 51 further comprising the step of a recording company introducing a new artist by attaching material from the new artist to the pre-recorded advertisement, message, jingle, song.

54. The vending system according to claim 49, wherein suggested media collections are offered the consumer and the demographic data are used to test market such collections.

55. An automated vending system for creating a design and/or prototype of a wearable item comprising:

- means for displaying a plurality of design and/or prototype sub-components that can be assembled to create a wearable item;
- means for selecting and manipulating design sub-components to create a novel wearable item means for originating design and or prototype components;
- means for manipulating design and or prototype components; and
- means for using the wearable item as a sample for production.

56. An automated vending system of claim 55 further comprising means for adding advertisement on wearable item to amortize the cost of the item.

57. An automated vending system of claim 55 further comprising means to add a charitable affiliation to the wearable item.

58. An automated vending system of claim 55, wherein the wearable item is sent out to bid anywhere in the world for production by a company which owns the vending system and or their contractors.

59. A business method for time stamping an invention in the vending system according to claim 55 to prove date and time of invention comprising the steps of providing means for storing the novel invention wherein the means for storing can be used to prepare a machine readable version of the invention.

- means for transmitting the novel invention wherein the means for transmitting the invention is over the internet; and
- means preparing a document copy of the novel invention for authentication purposes.

60. An automated vending system optimized for gardening comprising:

- means for displaying a plurality of garden-related decorative ornaments, tools, custom compositions, plant food, plants and pesticides;
- means inputting customer selection of decorative ornaments, tools, custom compositions, plant food, plants and pesticides;
- means for compounding custom compositions in response to said selection; and
- means to dispense at least one of decorative ornaments, tools, compositions, plant food, plants and pesticides in response to said input customer selection.

61. The vending system according to claim 60, wherein plants are selected from the group consisting of vegetative plants, seeds, bulbs, tubers, corms, rhizomes and roots.

* * * * *